

THE MOURNERS

CORDIAL

SORROW

Discovering what Grounds of Hope
Gods People have concerning their
DEAD

FRIENDS

By Samuel Willard, Teacher of a
Church in BOSTON.

2 Cor. 5. 1. For we know, that if our
Earthly House of this Tabernacle were
Dissolved, we have a Building of God,
an House not made with Hands, Eter-
nal in the Heavens.

Boston, Printed by Benjamin Harris, and
John Allen. 1691.
Very Suitable to be given at Funerals.



READERS,

WE live in a dying World. Our dearest Friends and most precious Relations are ever and anon bidding us a sorrowful farewell. To sanctifie God in a duly moderated Mourning at such a time, is a great but difficult Duty. God is most dishonoured by our admitting our passions to carry us beyond bounds; and a Christian never more needs relief, than on such occasions, when Nature influenced by corruption carries him into unbecoming transports of ungoverned Affections. God hath therefore, in his word, provided excellent Cordials to revive the Spirits of his Children; and keep them from fainting under these trials. One of them, and none of the least, is presented you in the following Discourse. These Sermons were Preached in a time when Death rode in Triumph among us; when many were carried dayly to their long home, and Mourners went thick about our Streets; and they were not, through Gods blessing, without their desired effect. And since there will be frequent occasions for you to make use of this Receipt, as long as you converse with Mortality, it hath been desired to be exposed

fed in Print for the benefit of more than had
 the advantage to hear it. If in an Hour of
 Temptation, God shall please to make it any way
 serviceable to your faith, and enable you to suck
 out any Consolation from it, let him have the
 praise, to whose blessing I commend it, who am

Your Servant for Christs sake,

Samuel Willard,

I Thes. 4. 13. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

MAN, who in his Creation was made of dissoluble Principles, is by his Apostasy subjected to that Dissolution, which, had he retained his Integrity, should never have actually seized upon him: whereas now the whole race of fallen men are daily exposed to be made a prey to Devouring Death, which comes armed against them in a thousand shapes; and without favour, or respect to persons, snatcheth them away from among the living: sometimes it comes on foot, taking here one and there another, in an easy progress; as in times of health and peace: other whiles it comes on horseback, Jehu-like, driving furiously, hurrying men away by Shoals to the Land of Darkness: In which it dissolves the most sacred Ties, and makes a separation between the nearest Relations, which occasions Mankind's

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being so often put into mourning. Now, Nature prompts men to mourn over their Deceased Friends, and we may as well root out the Affections planted in Humanity, as to deny them the liberty of venting themselves when there is an occasion offered; so the Christian Religion giveth us Rules for the due bounding, and right regulating of these passions, and it is a point of Christian Wisdom to be well instructed therein at all times, much more when the Providence of God orders it to be a time wherein the Sword abroad, and mortal sickness at home, are so often calling us to the exercise thereof: and he that is acquainted with the extravagant exorbitancy of his own Affections, will see a-bundant reason to take pains in learning of this Lesson. No man in his right mind can be so fond of sorrow, as not to be willing to have some lenitives applied to it, for the easing of the grief of it. *Heathen Morality* hath laid it self out very much upon this Subject; but alas! the best dose that ever that could provide for men, was nothing but a few *Narcotics*, to stupify, and not in the least to cure that Malady. He that would be well provided for his relief in this case, must consult *Paul* and not *Seneca*; the Word of God, and not Pagan Philosophy, and he is one excellent *Receipt* prepared to our hand in the Text and Context.

This Chapter belongs to the hortatory part of the Epistle; and from this verse to the end of the Chapter, he gives precious and profitable advice to the people of God about their mourning over their Deceased Friends: The advice it self is given in the Text, the arguments to strengthen it, and render it profitable to them, is in the following verses. The advice it self is, not to mourn despairingly over them; the reasons why they should not so do are three; taken from the consideration of the glorious Resurrection they shall ere long arrive at, the happy meeting which they shall then have with the Lord Jesus Christ, and their being thenceforth made to live with him for ever in glory; and one would think this were enough to set men down compleatly satisfied, could they embrace all this with Faith.

In the words then we may take notice of,

1. The Subject to whom the advice is given, *Brethren*; he applies it to such as were by profession Christians, and in the judgment of Charity, true believers. This Cordial is only provided for such, and if any other shall take it, it may prove to be poyson unto them.

2. The Subject concerning whom this advice is given; *Them which are asleep*: Sleeping is an expression which the Spirit of God makes frequent use of in the Scripture to express

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dying by ; and it is for the most part applied to the death of the Godly, thereby to take away the formidableness of it, and make it more welcome to us ; he therefore intends such as are dead in Christ, or those whom we are well perswaded of, that they had a title to him by a living faith : such, of whose death we have encouragement to believe that it is but a sweet sleep.

3. The subject matter about which the advice is given, *viz.* Sorrow : It refers to the Affection of grief, which is apt to break forth into, and vent it self in bitter mourning upon such sad and solemn occasions as these.

4. The advice it self which he gives in this case, wherein he doth not forbid all sorrow, but only regulates it. The Apostle Paul was no *Sisack* ; the Spirit of God never advised men to *Apathy* : there is danger in *despising* as well as in *fainting* under affliction, and therefore they are both cautioned against *Heb. 12. 9.* and there is a double limitation here set to it ; or rather a limitation with an explication.

1. The limitation it self is, *as do others* : *Gr. as the rest, or residue* ; i. e. of mankind : by these he intends such as are not Christians, nor have been instructed in the Doctrine of the true Religion : and the comparison may be referred either to the *Heathens*

against excessive Sorrow.

modes used by them in their mourning, or else to the degrees of sorrow which they were wont to express in it.

2. The other limitation or explication of the former, is, in these words; *which have no Hope.* Hope is an Affection very serviceable for the alleviating of sorrow, and where that is not active, grief will grow up to despair.

3. Here is also one general help offered against this irregular and unbounded mourning, viz. Knowledge: *I would not have you to be ignorant.* Implying that it was Gentile ignorance, which made them so to mourn; the knowledge and the thorough perswasion of sound Principles will help to fortifie us against the imitation of them.

The Substance of these words may be drawn into this

DOCTRINE.

Gods People in mourning over their Death, ought not to be so ignorant, as to sorrow like Heathen, or men without Hope.

If we consider the Doctrine with relation to the Text, and the Phraseology that is used in it,

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It may be taken up in several Propositions, which may serve for the explication and confirmation of it 19 43.

PROPOSITION I.

That Gods People have consolations which others are strangers unto.

God hath provided those comforts for his Children, which he hath not made common to the World: they have their Joys which a stranger may not meddle with without presumption, because he hath nothing to do with them. The Apostle, applying of himself to his Thessalonians, makes a plain difference between them, and others who did not believe: he leaves wicked men to sorrow without hope if they will, yea and he reckons that they have reason enough so to do, but he wholly disallows it in the Children of God, as a thing that is altogether unreasonable, and that must be because they have something peculiar to support their spirits withal, or else what should make the difference? The world indeed make high pretences to their comforts, but they are of another stamp and character than those that belong to the people of God, and no way comparable with them; and we may observe these four differences between them,

1. Those are but seeming comforts, where

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As these are *real*. They are but the shadow, these are the substance of Consolation. Of the worlds comforts, we have the Wisemans observation upon them, *Prov. 13. 14. Even in Laughter the heart is sorrowful*; they think they have some refreshments, but indeed they have none. But the comforts of Gods Children are realities; they are therefore said to *inherie substance*; there are true settled refreshments in the Joys of the Holy Ghost, which these partake in: there is neither delusion nor deceit in them.

2. They are of *mens own making*, but these are of Gods providing. Ungodly men arrogate them to themselves, they snatch at, and take them without any leave, or title to them; *they walk in the light of their own fire, and by the sparks which they have kindled, Isa. 50. 11.* But the Children of God have theirs given to them, *it is God that comforts them in all their afflictions, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4.* He hath made this Consolation for them in the promise, and he applies it unto them by his Holy Spirit, who imprints it upon their hearts indeleibly, and makes them to taste the sweetness and satisfaction there is in it. And Hence,

3. Those are *groundless*, but these are *grounded*. The ungodly man *builds without foundation*, whereas Gods Children are built *upon the Rock*. Sinners are under a curse, and

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and there is no peace unto them, if God may be believed, for he hath said it, *Isa. 57. 1.* and where there is no peace, how can there be any solid comfort? If they enjoy any favour Providentially, yet they have no security of it, being exposed to lose it every day, yea every moment; and while they have it, it is attended with a fearful curse: But the people of God have the assurance or security of theirs given to them. It is called *strong Consolation*, *Heb. 6. 18.* not only in regard of its prevalency over the greatest Temptations of afflictions, but also as it is well laid and immoveable. It hath its strength in the Everlasting Covenant, secured by the immutability and fidelity of God; and evidenced by those things that are wrought in them, which accompany salvation, attested by the Spirit of God in them, so bearing witness unto their Sonship.

4. Those are but *during this life* at the farthest reach, but the're are both *in and after Death*. Our Saviour Christ, speaking of wicked men, saith that *they have their consolation*, *Luk. 6. 24. i. e.* they have already as much as ever they are like to have. Their personal comforts will reach no farther than so, *Psal. 49. 17.* for when he dies, he shall carry nothing away. Their relative comforts do now also cease: whilst they live with them, they solace themselves in them, and
make

Against excessive Sorrow.

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Make merry, but when they dye, they have now no more comfort of them: whereas the Children of God have their consolations lying beyond death, this *mole* cannot eat them out, this *thief* cannot rob them of them: their joy for themselves is, that *their Names are written in heaven*; their solace in their relations, when they are dead, is, That they are gone to Christ.

U S E I.

Hence then, how little cause have the world to scorn Gods people, or they to envy ungodly men? these do both herein appear to act preposterously, and altogether unwarrantably. Let scornful men flout as long as they will at the children of God, because they comfort themselves in the Word and Promise, and settle themselves on an Hope which they derive from thence: it will be found one day that they had no cause so to do. Let them boast and brag of their greater and better comforts, they will shortly know themselves to have been grossly mistaken. Let them look never so well of it to an eye of carnal reason, and seem to be the only darlings of Providence; yet Gods Children have no just cause to malign them upon this account, or to fret and be disquieted.

ed by reason of it; for God hath provided *better things* for them which the others have nothing to do withal, nor shall ever be made the partakers of: when at any time you are assaulted with this Temptation, and it is like to be too hard for you, then read and ponder well upon these two precious portions of the Word of God in, *Psal. 37,* and 73.

U S E II.

Let this warn every one to beware how they apply to themselves the consolations of the Word of God. There are some whom they do belong unto, but they are not all who may make this claim: there are terrors there also, which are the portion of many: and it is not a little perilous in this case, for men to arrogate to themselves that which is not their own: when God is about to speak comfort to his people, he then saith unto ungodly men, hands off; he would have them to stand by and hear, but not to presume: if their hearing of them pronounced upon his people, may awaken them to see their own misery in being without them, and excite them to diligence in seeking after an interest in them according to the Gospel directions; this is proper, and will be profitable; but if they take them as spoken to themselves

them, run away with them, and never regard what it is that can only give a title to them, this will prove a woful delusion; and there are none that perish more fearfully than these do; Our business, when we hear of these things, is to enquire seriously, what manner of persons are they to whom they belong? and then to reflect and ask, am I one of these? if indeed we are, we may then safely live upon them, they are our portion; but if it be otherwise, they will not prove Cordials, but poysons to us. It is as dangerous to take comforts un-given as to refuse them when they are offered.

U S E III.

Hence then what a shame is it that Gods Children should sink under troubles like other men? How much more then that they are not able to bear up so quietly under them as others can? that a shadow should seem to do more than the substance? It must needs be here granted, or else we shall do injustice to good men, that there is a vast difference between the contempt of afflictions, which the men of the world make such a flourish withal, and the humble sense and patient submission of the children of God, which makes less shew and noise: but of

there is a decorum to be observed by us; and if we faint in the day of adversity, who have such a cordial to support and refresh our spirits withal, it saith that we are not in the right exercise of Faith. Let them despond who have nothing to trust to, but let not those sink in their spirits at any thing who have Gods comforts to support them: know it therefore that there is one in the Word of God which is suted to every condition that you can be in; and it is strong enough to do the thing it is prepared for, if you would but take it.

PROPOSITION II.

*That Grace doth not secure any against Dying?
Or, Gods Children must dye as well as other
men.*

A bodily death is the common lot of all sorts of men, and Piety is no more a Bail against it than wealth or honour, or pleasures. Our Apostle doth not here go about to encourage his *Thessalonians* by telling them that they shall not lose their godly friends by death, no, but he endeavours to give them relief against oppressing sorrow in case they do lose them, presuming it to be a thing which they are daily to expect. *The truth*

of this, in *Thesi*, is confirmed unto us by daily observation, we see the best, the most holy, the most desirable to be going off the stage from time to time: all men may make that observation, *Psal. 49. 10. He sees that Wisemen dye*: when therefore Christ promi-
seth that some, *viz.* such as had believed on him, should never die, it is not meant of a bodily but of a spiritual Death. Nor do some extraordinary instances of those that were translated that they should not see Death, as *Enoch* and *Elias*, invalidate the the generl Truth of this assertion, being only special exceptions from the rule. But that which calls for our observation and enquiry here, is, why Gods Children who are united to Jesus Christ, whose sins are pardoned, and from whom the Curse is removed, must yet die as well as other men, upon whom the curse of Death lies in its weight? and we may take a summary account of it in the following *Conclusions*. For although there is enough to stop our mouths, and silence our cavillings, to consider that Infinite Wisdom hath seen meet in soveraign pleasure so to determine it: yet this Wisdom hath its reasons, and if we know them not all, yet it hath told us sufficient not only to silence, but to satisfie us too: here then let us observe:

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mans nature, (as some do fallily suppose, and frivolously plead) but a consequent upon the great Transgression, and a moral effect of it, *Rom. 5. 12. By one man sin came into the world, and death by sin.* God had laid a restraint upon Mortality in mans Creation, but he took it off again upon mans Apostasy, and left him to be a prey in the hands of it. If mankind had never sinned, he had never died. It is therefore a curse in its first introduction into the world, being in it self an evil which mans nature is grievously averse unto, and being brought in as a penalty upon the creature, and therein a clear discovery of Gods righteous Displeasure at man: the Apostle therefore makes that an argument undeniably to prove that *Sin was in the world from Adam to Moses, because men died all that while, Rom. 5. 13, 14.*

2. That the whole Curse of the first Covenant is taken off from a man in his Justification. It is of the very nature of this benefit, that it removeth the Curse from that person to whom it is applied. The nature or essence of the Curse consists in that sentence of Condemnation which is past upon the sinner; now in Justification that very sentence is taken off from the man, and there is no more of it lying out against him, *Rom. 8. 1. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ. The forgiveness of sins*

is contained in it, and where sin is forgiven, the punishment of it is removed; such therefore are said to be past from death to life.

3. Hence the believers Death is spoiled of it's sting. It ceaseth to be unto them a cursed Death. God can suffer Death it self to continue, and yet take the malediction out of it: he doth so by all the other afflictions which befall his people in this life, in that he causeth them all to work together for their good. *Rom. 8. 28.* and he doth so by Death it self too, for what saith *Paul, Phil. 1. 21. to dy is gain.* When the poyson is taken out of it, it becomes an innocent and a serviceable thing, as will be seen afterward: and thus it is to all Gods people, so that *Paul* could make that challenge in behalf of all the regenerate, *1 Cor. 15. 45. O Death where is thy sting?* he doth not say where is Death? but where is its sting? and this is the very thing which makes a Child of God not to be afraid to dy.

4. Yet there are many reasons why God sees it convenient that believers should die, and some of them are these following.

1. It is fitting that they should taste something of the fruit of sin. Though this be not in the way of a curse, yet they must have some experiment of it in the way of Providence. The Apostle tells us, *Rom. 8. 10 The body is dead because of sin.* One thing designed in this expression is, that because
Gods

Gods people were once sinners, therefore God will have them to tast of a bodily death. This becomes to them a witness that once they were Transgressors, and serves to keep them humble under all the grace they have received, and the sense of Gods love in Christ, which they enjoy, to think that they still must die. It is true, if there were nothing else of advantage to them by dying but only this, God would not have thus continued it to them: but still, this is a Remembrancer to them as long as they live; and it is one profitable use of it to them, *to bring sin to remembrance.*

2. Death is sometimes a fatherly correction which God inflicts upon his Children. There must be acknowledged a vast difference between a curse and a chastisement: the matter of the one and the other may be the same, but the design which denominates them, is vastly divers. A *curse* is ever the fruit of hatred, but a *correction* hath always love in the bottom of it: there is indeed anger in it; and it consists well enough with the love of God, for him to be angry with his children, and when he is so, he can lay hard blows upon them, and love them still, because they are for their good and not hurt; yea, *because he loves them he chastens them;* Heb. 12: 6. And sometimes he strikes so hard that he kills them. God is angry with Moses for his unadvis

Unadvised carriage at Meribah, and he must die for it: David provokes him in the matter of Uriah, and he must lose his Child on the account: and though such a stroke hath a great deal of smart in it, yet there is no harm comes of it.

3. Gods people must die, that sin may be rooted out of them. Sin is beyond dispute the worst evil, and the greatest misery; that Gods people are for the present subjected to it, and have the remains of it in them, they wofully experience: and it is no little infelicity that abides them to consider that they will be sinning as long as they continue in this life: this makes them to cry out dolefully of their wretchedness, with him, Rom. 7. 24. and it is Gods good pleasure not to destroy this sin all at once, not totally as long as they live; but they must know it to be an evil and bitter thing by sad experience in themselves: But when they die, then they sin no more; that unhappy work is at an end with them for ever; so then, their death is to them a passage into a sinless estate: and henceforth God will be no more dishonoured nor their souls wounded by their sin.

4. And they must die that their Grace may be perfected, and this is consequent upon the former: for till sin be totally abolished in the man, his Grace must needs labour under imperfection. All the sanctification of a believer in this life is but in part, and because of this, he practically comes short in

every thing that he sets about : and it is no little trouble upon his spirits to find so much of the mixture of sinful defect in every thing which he takes in hand : but now Death passeth him over to the fulness of a perfect man in Christ ; the Souls that are gone through Death unto Glory, are called *The Spirits of Just Men made perfect* : Heb. 12. 23. there are they arrived unto entire Holiness ; and this also they get by Dying.

5. By Death Gods People are delivered from Satan and ungodly men, as long as they are here in this life, they dwell within the reach of these enemies, and they give them no little molestation ; partly by Persecution, putting them to all the trouble they can ; partly by Temptation, endeavouring to draw them aside into sin, that so they may wound their Souls ; and partly by their ungodly lives, whereby they are to these a continual vexation, as the Sodomites were to Lot, whilst he dwelt among them ; so that their life is a *meer dwelling in Mesch,* and *sojourning in the Tents of Kedar* : and these *Daughters of Herb*, makes them weary of their lives : But when they come to die they are then removed from them, and shall be molested with them no more for ever : they are now called away and carried to that place

place where no such creatures as these shall ever come.

6. Death puts an end to all the sorrows of Gods Children which they encounter withal here. This world is a vale of tears, sin hath made it to be so; and the Saints of God have a very large share in the troubles of this life; the few days which are allowed to them to live in, are full of trouble: and very often do they meet with a great deal more of this uncomfortable entertainment than others do: tiresome days and weary nights are appointed for them: the curing of the wantonness of their flesh, and the trial of their Graces do call for this, and the Wisdom of God sees it meet that they should be thus exercised; but though it be for their benefit, it is yet troublesome, and will be an happiness to be rid of it, when we are fit for such a delivery: and this shall be when they dy; now shall all their tears be wiped away, and their cheeks shall be dried: their bodies will now rest in their graves, when sickness and pain shall hurt them no more: and their Souls are conducted into that place, where trouble is a perfect stranger, where grief and molestation were never known.

5. Death also finisheth all their labour. The work of a Christian is a great work, and hard too; the remains of strong and active corruption in them, together with the weak-

every thing that he sets about : and it is no little trouble upon his spirits to find so much of the mixture of sinful defect in every thing which he takes in hand : but now Death passeth him over to the fulness of a perfect man in Christ ; the Souls that are gone through Death unto Glory, are called *The Spirits of Just Men made perfect* : Heb. 12. 23. there are they arrived unto entire Holiness ; and this also they get by Dying.

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5. Death also finisheth all their labour. The work of a Christian is a great work, and hard too; the remains of strong and active corruption in them, together with the weak-

ness of every Grace they have, and the opposition which they encounter both from without and within, makes it to be so: and though it be the delight of the new man to be engaged in Holiness, yet the employment it self is work, and wrestling and fighting. Now, as God hath appointed this life to be unto his people a time of labour; so the other life is for rest, and it is Death which wafteth them over into it, *Rev. 14. 13. They rest from their labour.*

6. It removes them to the place of their compleat Happiness. Sin hath spoiled this lower world from being a place for the enjoyment of perfect felicity, it is now in heaven alone that it is capable of being possessed. That is the Kingdom of Glory, there are the *fullness of joys and pleasures for evermore*, that is the place where our portion is laid up and reserved for us, and we must go thither in order to our inheriting of it: thither is our Bridegroom gone, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose embraces our felicity doth consist, and thither must we go to meet and enjoy him: there is our everlasting employment and fruition; there is all our company either gone or going, for that is the place of the *General Assembly*; we are strangers here, there is our home, so that we must either *die* or be *translated*, there being no other way to come at our Happiness; this latter

God

God sees not meet to indulge us withal, and therefore it must needs be by the former.

U S E I.

Learn hence that Death gives us no rule of judging whether men be good or bad. This is one of the *all things* which the Wise-man tells us *fall out alike unto all*, Eccl. 9. *beg.* the remarks that men are apt to make here are fallacious. A Judgment cannot pass in respect of Death it self, for *wisemen and fools both die alike*, nor can there be any censure safely made in respect of the circumstances with which it is clothed; godly *Josiah* dies just after the same manner in which wicked *Ahab* dies; both good men and bad men die, some in youth, some in old age, some by a natural, others by a violent Death. It is true, if there be an apparent reason to be read in the lives of men, a sober Judgment may be made about the manner of their dying, so far as to put us upon adoring of the Righteousness of God in it: but merely from thence to conclude them to be either good or bad, is to argue from a false Topick, *Luke 13. begin.*

U S E II.

Let this teach the children of God to maintain their hopes by looking upon something beyond Death. The Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 15. 19. *if our hope in Christ were for this life only, we were of all men most miserable; and it must needs be so upon this article, that believers must die as well as others; for who meet with more of the troubles of this life than they do? It is the great folly of ungodly men, who think their houses are for ever, that they lean upon them, and that they look for, and lay up nothing on the other side of the grave: but let not the people of God do so, who live in continual expectation of their change, and are thoroughly perswaded that there is nothing in this world that can be a sutable supply for that eternity into which they are posting. Let our Hope then live upon such things as Death it self can never be able to touch. If Grace cannot secure us from dying, let us then exercise it unto the making sure of something, which shall be to us better than life.*

U S E III.

This may put Gods People upon the doing

of all the good they can whilst they live; yea and making hast to do it. This is the inference which the wiseman draws from the Doctrine of Dying, *Ecc. 9. 10. whatsoever thine hand finds to do, do it with all thy might;* and it is a good lesson, if it were well learnt and practised; to think that we must die shortly, and that there is then no more Service to be done for God by us; that if we would do any thing for his Service, we must do it now, and to spur our selves on by these thoughts unto a diligent endeavour to be redeeming every shread of time for that work, which shall turn to a good account, for the bringing of as much honour to God, the doing of as much good for the souls of others, the laying up of as much treasure in Heaven for our selves as we can: and thus shall we put our selves into a very comfortable posture to entertain our death at any time, when God shall see meet to send it to fetch us away; for *Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing.*

U S E IV.

It may exhort us to get all the benefit we may by the People of God, whilst they live. Are we sure that these Excellent Ones must die shortly? let us then make use of them presently;

presently; now let us improve them for our spiritual advantage, and get all that we can out of them. When once they are gone hence, we shall have no farther liberty or opportunity for converse with them, till we follow them unto, and overtake them in that blessed *Sankhedrim*: and if we now neglect to improve their graces for our instruction and edification, it will then repent us, when they are taken away from us, and we can come no more at them. There is no going to the *house of darkness*, to ask them any question there, or to enquire after their Experiences: if you should call at their graves, there will be no *hearing* nor *answer*: if then you would have any benefit from them, seek it now, and so you will have abundant cause to bless God for them when they are gone hence, their memorial will be precious to you, and invite you to follow hard after, that you may be with them for ever.

PROPOSITION. III.

The Death of the Godly is but a sort of sleep.

The Spirit of God takes delight in expressing it by this Metaphor in Scripture; hence also their grave is resembled unto a *Bed*, and their abiding in it unto *Rest*, *Isa.*

37. 2. and there are many respects in which the resemblance suitably expresseth the things only we must here cautiously observe, that it refers only to the bodies of the Saints; for their Souls sleep not, but do immediately pass over to actual perfect blessedness in the Kingdom of Glory. It is the body properly that *dies*, it is that therefore which *sleeps*. The Heathen Poets were wont to call sleep the *Image of Death*; and the *Brother of death*, because of the similitude between them, but more especially doth the resemblance hold in the Death of Godly ones. For,

1. Sleep is a binding up of the senses, and thereby it takes off the apprehension of pain and trouble. A man that is asleep doth not feel his sorrow. If it be Bodily pain, or if it be any grief oppressing the spirit, by falling asleep he loseth the present sense of it: as long as it keeps him waking he is molested with it, but now it is to him as if it were not; and Death puts a real end to all the molestations and sorrows of the people of God. In this life they are full of them, and they accompany them to their dissolution; but at the Grave they leave them, and they know them no more: *All their Tears are now wiped away*, sighing and sorrow now cease for ever.

2. Sleep gives a suspension to labour. Men that work must be awake, when they

go to sleep they leave off labouring; it puts an end to present business; men lay aside their work, when they lay themselves down to rest: and the death of Gods Children gives a cessation unto their work: the time of life is working time for Gods People, and they have a great deal of business to be employing themselves in, whilst they are here, in glorifying of God, and in working out of their own Salvation; this is enough to employ all their time, if they had a great deal more than they have; but when once they come to dy, they have done with this, there is no *business* to be done in the Grave, *Ecc. 9. 10.* and this is one part of the happiness of Believers in their Death, That they rest from their Labours, *Rev. 14: 13.*

3. Sleep is a very comfortable and desirable thing to them that are weary. It gives them rest; when a man hath been toiling and turmoiling all the day long, and tired himself out at his business, it is a desirable and pleasant thing for him to lay himself down to sleep, so saith the Wise man, *Ecc. 5. 12.* *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet;* and the death of godly men must needs be comfortable to them, when they have borne the heat of the day, and gone through many wearisome troubles of life in a weary world; and every gracious soul finds it to be so; who hath been ready to faint under his burden:

It is an **Encomium** which is put upon the Grave, Job 3. 17. *there the weary are at rest;* and of righteous men it is said, that now *they rest in their beds,* Isa. 57. 2.

4. The night is the most proper time to sleep in: Then it is that all things are wont to be at quiet; and there is no work to be done, when the darkness invites men to rest; we therefore read, 1 *Thes.* 5. 7. *they that sleep, sleep in the night.* The day is accommodated for labour, and the night for repose, and the time of death is compared to a night; the Grave in which the Dead are laid, is called a *land of Darkness*; and also the troublesome condition of men in this life is compared to a night. There is a great deal of darkness upon the present condition of Gods People whilst they are in this world; and the more troubled the affairs of this life are to them, by reason of manifold afflictions which they encounter withal; the more desirable and pleasing it must needs be unto them, to turn aside into the Grave, as into a bed of rest, where they may be gotten out of it, and be quiet.

5. Sleep is in order to waking again, and that refreshed; men that lay themselves down to take a sleep, do propose to themselves to awake and to rise again; and not only so, but also to have their spirits restored, and their strength renewed, and them-

selves to be rendred more lively and vigorous by the benefit they have gotten by it : and thus it shall be in respect of the children of God that die : their death is therefore but a longer sleep, and when the time of it is over, they shall assuredly awaken again, and that to their compleat satisfaction : this the Psalmist, in contemplation of his dissolution, comforts himself withal, *Psal. 17. 15. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness* ; and this is the Prophets encouragement, *Isa. 26. 19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise,*

U S E I.

This consideration may serve to take off the terrors of Death from the minds of Gods people, Death indeed is called the *King of Terrors* and well may it bear this title upon it, with respect to ungodly men, and that because it comes to do execution upon them : to poss their Souls away into the place of endless miseries, and to lodge their Bodies in the *Prison of the Grave*, there to be reserved for a *Day of Vengeance* : but it is far otherwise with respect to the Godly : When the Lord comes to call them off by dying, it is but to lay them to sleep.

he doth now put his children to bed, that they may rest. And this is the great comfort of it, that they not only sleep but they *Sleep in Jesus*; he watcheth over them, while they ly and rest, and he will keep them safe all night long, till that happy *Morning* comes, in which he will awaken and call them up to *Glory*.

The Spirit of God puts this name upon Death, on purpose to make his people the less afraid of dying. Who is wont to be afraid to lay him down to his rest? what terrors are there in going to sleep? and when death hath lost it's sting this is the worst of it. It is true, it puts an end to our work, but then it begins our rest; and do but think how sweet this rest will be. Do but give diligence to make that one thing sure, that you are in Christ, by a true and living Faith, and then entertain these charitable thoughts of death, that so you may not go up and down in frights and terrors at the apprehensions of it, and forewarnings given you to be in expectation of it, but when you see the night coming you may be refreshed to think that you shall quickly go to sleep, and there ly still and quiet till the last Trumpet shall awaken you to come and meet Jesus Christ; in his *Kingdom* and *Glo-*
ry.

V. S. E. M.

Let it serve to direct Gods people, what to do, that their death may be comfortably thought of, and expected by them : and that is by endeavouring to get this secured, that it shall be no other than a sleep to you. This is the lot of all Gods Children ; but though Death shall be really thus to every true Believer, yet there is something to be done by them, that it may be sensibly so to their minds, and they may be able thus to entertain it when it comes ; and for this end there are these three things which you are to be advised about, viz.

1. Labour to feel the weariness of this life. They are the weary, that would fain be at rest. As long as life and the concerns of it are not tiresome to us, so long we are loth to dy, and the thoughts of it are ungrateful to us ; but when it is thus with us, then the very forethoughts of it will afford us matter of refreshment ; Job could say, that he would not live always, if he might have such an indulgence granted him ; and there are a great many things which have enough in them to make us weary, if they were well pondred : there is that sin which we must be always dragging after us, and putting

putting us to continual grief: and there are the sins of others, which we must see and hear, which will wring tears from our eyes: there are also the sorrows which this life is burdened withal, and will not be at an end whilst that lasts: yea and the very difficulties with which a Christian doth any thing for God here, by reason of his weak grace, and the strong corruption which makes resistance to it; yea, and the dismal days that are expected to come: it is an happiness to be at rest out of the noise and bitterness of such things: that therefore was a merciful promise which was made to the godly King *Josiah*, 2 Chron. 34. 28.

2. Be sure to get your work done. The child or servant who hath loitered all the day is loth to come home at night, because he can give so poor an account of his business: but he that hath followed his labour with diligence, and improved his time carefully in the work he was set about, goes home to his rest with a great deal of chearfulness. There is nothing which makes a Child of God more unwilling to dy, than to look back and see how wofully he hath neglected the work of God which he was called unto, and how unhappily he hath been diverted from it; *he is blessed whom his Lord finds so doing.* To have our great Master come to us & say, you have

have laboured sufficiently for the day, come now and lay you down to your rest, is a most comfortable thing: *be you faithful unto the death, and it shall be so.*

3. Endeavour to get this assurance that your souls shall be safe lodged when you dy. This is the great concern of all men. The soul is every wise mans principal care, and when that is secured all is well: he that can say as *Paul*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of God, eternal in the heavens, hath enough to satisfy him; and when death comes he may say with the Psalmist, Psal. 116; 7. Return unto thy rest O my Soul! Make sure of your union unto Christ, and it shall be so: then shall your Soul go to Christ, and Be with him which is best of all: and you may then with greatest freedom and chearfulness recommend your body to it's bed, where it shall rest, till it be called to the same blessed eternity of Glory with it's companion in the Resurrection.*

P R O P O S I T I O N IV.

When Godly ones dy, it is lawful and a duty for their Friends to Mourn over them.

Sorrow for the Death of Pious relations

is, so far from being a sin, that the Omission of it would be so. Our Apostle doth not here tell them, that he would not have them to sorrow at all: but he only regulates this Mourning; we have therefore in the Scripture the examples of the most eminent and holy men recorded for this without any the least reflection made upon them for it; yea Jesus Christ himself wept at the grave of Lazarus: we shall furthermore find, that it is one Judgement, which God hath in his word threatned to befall some, that they shall die unlamented. We may take this brief account of the ground or reason of this conclusion.

1. Sorrow or Mourning is nothing else but the acting of the Affection of Grief. To grieve, to sorrow, and to mourn do all intimate one and the same thing. Grief is the inward principle, and sorrow is the expression or exertion of this principle; by the influence of it upon the spirits, oppressing and dejecting of them, and mourning outwardly, which discovers it by sighing, & weeping, & bitter complaints, that persons make, or whatsoever other outward symbols of it men are wont to signalize it by, as by solitariness, & walking softly, putting on Sack Cloth, lying in the Dust; which kinds of practices we find recorded in Scripture.

2. Grief is an affection which is stirred by the apprehension of a present evil, that oppresseth

presseth one, and cannot be remedied. Grief derives, principally from *Hated*, which is an aversion from evil, and will always some way or other discover its cause of it; which various ways of expressing it self, according to the different Postures of it, give denomination to the several Derivative Affections. Now there are three respects which the evil bears, that give occasion for the stirring of Grief: it is a *present evil*: for if it be future, it moves *fear*; It is something that is upon one that makes impression upon this affection. And it is an *oppressing evil*: a *man's spirit* will sustain a great deal of *infirmity*, but when it overbears, then it makes it begin to sink: and it is an evil that *cannot be remedied*: as long as the man hath any hopes that he may bear it down and repel it, *Anger* takes place, and fortifies against it: but when there is no such expectation, then it sets grief on work: the Spirit is now straitned and burdened by it.

3. The Death of Friends and Relations gives a proper occasion for the excitation of Grief in us. It hath all of that in it which is proper to the object of such an Affection. *It is an Evil*; it is one of those things which are greatly averse to our natural inclinations; it deprives us of those good things in which a great deal of our love was laid up: it is a *Beavement*, so *Jacob* accounted it, *Gen. 42*

14. It is a present evil: it is that which makes an actual separation between us, and our chiefest comforts, and it is an oppressing evil; the most of our delight which we place in any Created Objects, is wont to be carried forth unto these; it therefore rends our very Cauls, and streins our heart-strings. Yea, and it is an irremediable evil; they are now gone from us, and they must never come to us again; Death makes a total and utter separation; there is no returning again to have any converse among the Living, when we are once gone from hence; all hopes of any farther communion in this world is now wholly cut off. Job 14 7 with 10. there is hope of a Tree, &c. but man dies and wastes away; yea man gives up the Ghost, and where is he?

4. Hence mourning upon such an occasion is but a rational improvement of a natural affection. All the Affections were put into men by God when he Created them, and so they belong to the very nature of Humanity; now there was an use and serviceableness that these were put into man for; and that was to help him to carry himself suitably to all the occasions of his life. Sin indeed hath put these much out of order, and made them very unruly: but still there is a rational use to be made of them, which is in it self lawful for men, yea and a moral duty;

and by such an application or improvement, the Affection doth attain the moral end which it was placed in the man for: the thing it self therefore is warrantable; tho' the corrupt heart of sinful man, alwayes spoils his lawful actions, and they, being un-sanctified, *are not pleasing to God, nor can be*; yet the things themselves are justifiable: and hither belongs this of mourning over our dead Friends.

5. The Death of godly Friends hath in it the greatest occasion of all for our grief. Besides the tie of nature, which hath an equal respect here as elsewhere, we may observe a farther call to it under this consideration that they were godly, for;

1. The loss it self is upon this account the greater: and that both *personally*; we must needs suffer the more by it, by how much the more profitable they were unto us; and soul advantage is the greatest of all: the more of benefit that we enjoyed by having their presence and company with us, so much the more must we lose in our losing of them: and upon a *publick* account also, in which we are jointly concerned with others: the Death of the Godly is an universal loss; all that they lived among are sufferers by it; yea though it be of a private Christian, for he was a publick good; and this cannot but afford us the greater reason

reason and matter for sorrow : *There is always some of the glory of a people goes away when a godly man dies.*

2. The more of Gods anger oftentimes discovers it self in such a loss. God takes away his own Children from us, because he is angry at us : we lose our Friends becaule we had provoked God against us, and he herein testifies unto us that he is displeased at us : and there are no Deaths that carry so much testimony of the Divine Displeasure in them, as those of the righteous : for usually his taking of them out of the way, is that he may thereby make way for more Calamities to break in upon us ; *Isa. 57. 1. The righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*

3. Not to lay the Death of such to heart, is in it self a provocation given to God. When godly men go off the stage, and there is little or no notice taken of it ; it is scarce any matter of grief or trouble to others, they pass it over and are hardly concerned at it, God makes a critical remark upon it, and puts it down as an evil Omen, hence that complaint which he makes about it, *Isa. 57. 1. The righteous perisheth, and no man lays it to heart.*

U S E I.

Learn hence the difference between Christianity

Stianity and Stoicism. That would hamstring nature, and cut off the Affections from their natural activity, as if they had been given to and put into men for nothing else but to be suppressed; & to make no use of; as if he could enjoy no benefit by them but only by doing of violence to them: whereas the Word of God and the rules of Religion teach us, not to destroy, but to improve every faculty that is in us, and in particular our Affections, to the glory of God who gave them to us; and hereby it comes to pass that all in us may be actively engaged in his service; and truly, whatsoever men may think, if God should lose the honour of the employment of our Affection for him, we should rob him of a great deal of his due, yea cut off the very feet of our Souls, and how then should we be able to *run the race of his Commandments.*

V S E II.

Learn hence that the greatest griefs and greatest comforts may meet in the same subject, and from the same occasion. There is no such consolation in the Death of any, as of such as die in Christ, and yet no grief in the loss of any is comparable to it. The greater is their gain, the more is our cause of Joy, but because herein we suffer the great-

greatest loss, there is also the most occasion for our sorrow: the one is for them, the other is for our selves: only the due compounding of these will bring all to a right temper.

U S E III.

This tells us that those who part with their Friends without sorrow, are guilty of a trespass both against nature and Religion. The Apostle speaks of some that are without *natural affection*, 2 Tim. 3. 3. among other ways wherein this is to be discovered, this is one: and though men may boast of it as a commendable vertue, to bear up unconcerned under such Providences, yet it is here disapproved, and there is blame in *despising* as well as in *fainting* under afflictions.

U S E IV.

This bids Christians to beware of being over rigorous in censuring of others for their sorrow and mourning. This is not only that which God allows to men, but without which they cannot duly lay his Providence to heart, or rightly sanctifie him under it: yea, and there is a vent of grief which nature must be allowed to have; and as it is a piece of fruitless indiscretion to go about to damme it up, so it is over rigorous

rous for us to charge all of this nature to folly and sin.

V S E V.

Yet let it be a word of caution to all Mourners, to advise them that they take heed of giving too large allowance to themselves in this respect. Though God hath given us a liberty, yea prescribed to us a duty in this regard, yet there are those bounds within which he hath limited it, and it is the duty of Christians to beware least they transgress them; and the rather because our unruly affections are too apt to exceed herein: and for our help in this case the Doctrine will afford us a following Rule, viz.

PROPOSITION V.

Christians in their mourning ought not to imitate the rest of the World.

Although they may irreprehensibly sorrow at the death of their Friends, yet not as others do: These *Thessalonians* to whom the Apostle directed his Epistle, lived among a company of Heathen, who had not the Knowledge of God nor Christ, and had many Heathenish and Idolatrous Customs among

mong them, and particularly in their mourning over their dead: he here gives the people of God warning against imitating of them, or obliging themselves to all their vain and superstitious customs upon this account; and that we may take up a right notion of the caution here given, let us observe a few things.

1. *Negatively*; take these two observations;

1. *That it doth not follow from hence, that because the Heathen mourn for their Dead, therefore Christians are bound not to mourn at all.* It is not the thing it self, but the manner of it that is here cautioned against: none but Stoicks ever prohibited this; and that upon a false Hypothesis: it hath been already taken notice of, that the Law of nature and of Religion concur in it; and there are some things which meer Gentiles do, that are morally good, and commendable; and performed according to the light of nature; and dictates of right reason.

2. *Nor doth this caution forbid us to use all outward expressions of our sorrow in our mourning.* Such as weeping; when our Saviour said to the woman at the bier of her dead Son, *weep not*; it was not a reproof of her action, but a preparatory to her comfort, in the restoring of him to life again: and the putting of themselves into a mourning garb; although there be a great

deal of vanity and excess used by many in this regard; yet the thing in it self is not forbidden, and Gods People in former times were wont to use such expressions of grief as these; such as *covering of the lips, and putting on Sackcloth, &c* and if the inward affection be a thing lawful, the s^cher discovery of it cannot be denied, if it be not in it self a thing unworthy of a Christian, and reproachful to his Profession; but

2. Positively, three things may be observed.

1. That the Heathen are not to be imitated in their excessive Mourning. The Apostles drift in this place is, to perswade them to moderation in their sorrowing; and so not to follow the courses which such used as did exceed all bounds therein. Gods People are too prone to be overwhelmed with immoderate Grief on such occasions as these befalling them in the Providence of God. *Rachel weeps for her Children, and will not be comforted, because they are not*; the Gentiles were accustomed to do too much, but those that profess Christ should set bounds to themselves, and endeavour not to go beyond them: the reason of this difference will afterward follow; but here this Rule is to be attended, viz. *Gods Children should beware of indulging themselves in their sorrow.* They have a great deal more need

to lay Restraint upon themselves, the most are in greater danger of doing too much than too little: we find that the Egyptians mourned for Jacob, *five ty days*, Gen. 50 3. whereas Joseph mourned but *seven days*, ver. 10 al though he was his Father, and had been so tender of him, and this was not for want of filial affection or because they loved him better than he did, but because he had more grace than they, which helped to rectifie the exercise of naturall grief.

2. There are many Rites and Customs are used by them, which ought not to be imitated by the people of God, as being Heathenish and no way becoming of Christianity. I shall not here rake into all the foolish customs which the Gentiles additted themselves unto, but only point at some of them, which the Scripture takes notice of, and testifieth against, and gives warning to them that fear God that they beware of them; and those were such as were expressions of great immoderacy in mourning & carried also a little indecency in them. we find such a prohibition. Lev. 19 28. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you; in Deut. 14, 1. Ye are the Children of the Lord your God, ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the Dead. The argument he useth is from their relation and resemblance unto God; the things forbidden, are, cutting the flesh, making prints upon themselves, and valde

ness upon their heads: these were customs which the Heathen had taken up, and were in the practice of; and all to testify the exuberancy of their sorrow; and in likelyhood there were some Rites belonging to their superstitious worship, which had been taught them by the Devil, and were every way unseemly to be taken up by the people of God. Our Saviour also shewed his dislike of the use of *Minstrils* at the death of Friends, when he came where they were made use of, *Mat. . 23. &c.* these were a company of mourners, who with sad and doleful ditties stirred up and enkindled the sorrow of those that were related to the deceased party, and blow it up to great excess: The custom also of having *mourning women* belongs to the same original; nor are we to look upon it as approved by the spirit of God, because we read, *Jer. 9. 17. Call for the mourning women, that they may come;* for it is there used Rhetorically to signify the desperate miseries which were coming upon them, which would call for the bitterest lamentation. These women were, by their brutish howlings; and formidable ejaculations, accustomed to represent sorrow Tragically, and raise the affection in the mourners; which ought rather to have means used with it, whereby it may be rectified and moderated; now of all these, and such like things, it is to be said, that

the Customs of the Heathen are vain.

3. In a word, nothing is to be done here that doth not become the profession of the Gospel. Because the Heathen are not acquainted with this, it is no wonder if they do not comport with it in their Solemnities, but follow the depraved inclinations of their ungoverned affections. Though nature is not altogether to be restrained, yet it must always be regulated by Grace, and by the rules of Religion, which teach us better, and afford us help in all the cases which we can any way be concerned in. There is reason enough why we should not give our selves this unlimited allowance, in this consideration, that we have not so learned Christ: but a more special reason for it will follow to be considered in the next Proposition: and in general, let us remember, that it is the duty of all Christians, to let the world see and know in all things that they are not Heathen.

U S E I.

For Reprehension. This consideration will afford matter of rebuke to a great many professed Christians; and convince them of their sinful carriage in their sorrowing for their dead. We forbid them not to mourn and weep too on such occasions, but if they forget

one, but with different lighting.

44 The Mourners Cordial

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For Reprehension. This consideration will afford matter of rebuke to a great many professed Christians; and convince them of their sinful carriage in their sorrowing for their dead. We forbid them not to mourn and weep too on such occasions, but if they forget

forget themselves in it, they are to be rebuked: and this truth condemns.

1. All excess in this respect. Not to mourn at all, is unnatural; and to mourn beyond the stinted bounds is unChristian; and here in brief, let this be observed, That, whatsoever demeanure of ourselves under such bereaving providences, carries in it the discovery of a non subjection to the Holy Spotless Sovereignty of GOD in what befalls us. Whatsoever gives an obstruction to our careful and suitable attendance upon our Christian Duties, and whatsoever drives us to carry it discontentedly or discouragedly in the service of GOD; is of this nature, and lays us under this blame. They mistake themselves who think that *Moses*; or GOD either justified *Aaron*, upon that excuse which he made for his not eating the offering, according to the institution, *Levit. 10. 19 20.* GOD can pity and bear with; and graciously excuse the infirmities of his Children, when he doth not justify, and commend them, so did CHRIST his Disciples, when he found them sleep. There are the ungoverned carriages of persons, under the exorbitancy of their passions, which Religion teacheth them to avoid; and though God pity them, yet he will make them to be ashamed of, when they come to themselves.

Against excessive Sorrow.

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Any custom that favours of Heathenism. Whether there are any such customs in use among us, which derive from Pagan folly, I enquire not at present: But there is one practice that is become too much of a custom, which I cannot upon so fair an occasion omit the mention of without baulking a direct call of God to it: and that is for mourners to take the liberty, if not to look upon themselves as obliged to tarry from the house of God, and the publick Ordinances of his worship, if they have their dead lying by the Walls upon a Sabbath day: and that excessive grief may plead some excuse and compassion for some who do so; yet that it self is a sin, and therefore cannot make this to be none. But the usual reason for this piece of state is, because, forsooth, they may not appear abroad in company, but in their mourning habits, and these are not to be worn (according to custom) before they go the Interment of the Deceased Relation: and what is this but downright Heathenism? I am sure David did otherwise: 2 Sam. 12. 19, 20. when he perceived that the Child was dead, &c. he came into the house of God, and worshipped; and Gods people have never more need to wait upon God in his own way, for his grace and help to support them, then when their

their hearts are burdened and oppressed with over-bearing sorrow.

U S E II.

To exhort Gods children to set themselves to use the means against this excessive Heathenish mourning. The main help against this will take in with the following proposition, but here be advised in general,

1. To avoid every unnecessary thing which may tend to put your Affections beyond the due bounds. And one thing I would here point at is the keeping of your dead too long in your sight. *Abraham* was a gracious man, and he wept and mourned at *Sarah's* death, as a testimony of the tender love he bare to her; but he knew his own infirmity, and how much such an object lying always before his eyes, would tend to put his affections out of order; he therefore desires as soon as is convenient to have her interred, and so removed out of his sight, *Gen. 23. 4.*

2. To labour to get your hearts established with those thoughts and considerations, which may give you true support under your sorrows; and let them not be such poor ones as the Heathen were wont to make use of, because they could find no

better:

better ; but such as have substantial matter of easing and alleviating of grief in them : the word of GOD affords us many of these, and they are the Cordials which GOD hath provided for us, and are to be taken or made use of at such a time as we have so great need of them ; and they are either such as respect ourselves: where we have this assurance given us, that GOD lays no affliction, brings no bereavement on his Children, but what is intended, and shall effectually prove for their benefit : or else such as respect those that are taken from us, concerning whom we have manifold reasons given us in the word of GOD to hope well concerning them, which is next to be taken notice of. Hence.

PROPOSITION VI.

GODS People have an Hope concerning theirs that are asleep, with which they ought to alleviate their sorrow in Mourning over them.

There are some who take this Phrase in our text, [*who have no Hope,*] to be a Paraphrasis to express the Heathen by, of whom that is one Title, Eph. 2. 12. *without Hope* ; as if Heathen and Hope-less Men were equivalent terms : Certain it is that

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the Apostle useth this expression as a reason why the people of GOD should moderate their Grief, upon all such occasions more than the Heathen do, Because these have a good Hope, whereas those have none at all. In the making out of this Proposition; there are two enquiries may be made & resolved, viz.

1. What influence Hope hath upon our sorrow for the moderating of it.

2. What Ground of Hope GOD's people have concerning their Dead, more than others,

1. What influence Hope hath upon sorrow for the moderating of it.

A. It hath already been observed that sorrow is an affection which sinks the Spirits under the pressure of a present evil that is felt : and hereupon the greater the evil is the more sinking it must needs be. The Spirits of men have some portion of strength in them, so that they are able to bear a considerable burden, and to stand upright under it without sinking ; but sometimes they meet with a burden which is too heavy, and then they stoop, & are overwhelmed. Now though afflictions themselves, are not alike heavy, yet there is nothing that puts a greater weight into any trouble that befalls us than to look upon it as a suffering that is irreparable ; for this adds despair unto sor-

& that is a breaking billow indeed; and the more our closing affections are ingaged and united to a thing the more terrible a thought it is, to consider that we have not only lost it, but that we can never enjoy it any more and that the thing it self is also lost irremediably. That therefore which will ease us in this circumstance, will greatly abate from our present distress, and make it to be nothing near so molestful to us; and this is done by Hope.

Now this is the nature of Hope, that it is an affection in the exercise whercof we entertain our minds with the grounded expectation of some future good. The *object of hope is good*; it is one of those affections which carries us after our object, and enables us to embrace it; it is *derived from love*; and the good which it doth embrace is something *future*; it hath it not in hand or present possession, the man need not hope for that which he hath; but he sees it at a distance; but yet Hope carries the Soul to the thing, as far off as it is, enableth him to entertain it; and for this reason the ancient Patriarchs are said to *see the promise afar off*, and yet to *embrace it*, Hebr. 11. 13. and in this respect it makes absent things to be present. The *hand* wherewith this affection lays hold upon its object, is *expectation*; it looks for it, the man presumes and promiseth

himself, that although at present he be without it, yet he shall in due season enjoy it; that it will undoubtedly come to him, if he can but have patience to tarry for it, until the proper season: he therefore sees it not only absent but future too; that it is coming, and will be present before it be long: and this expectation is not a meer fancy, but is built upon reason; the strength therefore of this hand is the ground upon which the expectation is built, according to the measure of stability there is in that, is this Hope either stronger or weaker.

Now these grounds of expectation are fetched from three *Topicks*, in which also there is a gradation, or so many degrees of settlement.

There is *Possibility*: this is the lowest, and yet it hath its support; for Hope is willing to live, though it have the meanest and thinnest maintainance to live upon; if it can but have a few crumbs, it will not starve: it will keep it self up upon no more than a *who knows*? *Jon: 3. 9.* if it doth not see the matter to be clogged with an utter impossibility, it will not give up: Though the man hath a great deal of fear upon him, and a great many improbabilities are in his view, making him to question, that he is willing to hope too. Then there is *Probability*, and this hath a great deal more

of life and nourishment in it; Hope can quarter it self pretty comfortably upon this, though there is also a gradation in this, and the more likelihoods there are of the things obtaining; the better Table Hope is able to keep: and with these discoveries it is able to suppress those fears which may make any motion in him by reflecting upon the possibility that the thing may miscarry; especially if things be not near an equipoise, but every thing bids fair for a good Issue likely to Enſue.

Finally there is Certainty; and this is the top of all; when the thing is so secure, that there is no possibility of its failing, the foundation of it is built upon such grounds as cannot miscarry, or in the least be prevented; this furnishes Hope with such a rich Table, that it is able to feast it every day, and make merry in spite of all that can interpose to disturb it; compare, 2 Cor. 4. 16. where the Apostle tells us how they bare up chearfully under afflictions, in hope of better things; with chap. 5. 1. where he gives an account of the strength of this, for we know, &c.

And now we may easily discover what influence this must have upon sorrow to temper it, and make it moderate, viz. by giving us a prospect of good with relation to that very evil which hath put us to trouble; and there are these effects which are the

the natural result of it, all of which are very serviceable unto this purpose.

1. It makes the affliction look less then it did before ; it hath not so much in it now as appeared to us at the first aspect : for by this hope entertained, we begin to discern that it is not so great an evil as we had reckoned it to be : the man had over-rated it, whilst he was looking upon it thro' the spectacles of despair ; but Hope puts a sweeter colour and countenance upon it ; it makes him to resolve that it is nothing near so bad as he had been perswaded by his misgiving thoughts : it takes off many of those evil circumstances which he thought it to be attended withal ; and this greatly heightens it, and makes it be far more portable ; thus the Psalmist eased himself when he found the burden ready to sink him with its weight, *Psal. 43. ult. Why art thou cast down O my soul, hope thou in God, &c.*

2. It moderates the affection of fear which before did exceed. Fear in excess affords continual nourishment unto sorrow ; if this passion be but moderated, the other will be far better dealt with : moderate fear is an help to men, because it puts caution into them, and employs them in a diligent using of means to redress their troubles ; but if it grows beyond the bounds of moderation, it then drives men from endeavours,
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and betrays them into the hands of despair, which is the bitterest ingredient of Sorrow: now Hope is a preventive to this; because, how sore soever the present distress be, it commands the man to expect a good issue of it, and to resolve with him, Psal. 56. 3. what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

3. It diverts the mind with better thoughts; sorrow takes a great deal of pleasure in feeding it self with poring upon black and bitter speculations; it findeth a kind of a sullen contentment in representing every thing to it self with Sable Colours, and thereupon to sink it self yet lower with its own thought whereas Hope interposeth more bright and lightsome things for the mind to be looking upon, and by such an entertainment as this is, gives unto it a very happy diversion; the heart is hereby opened, and hath liberty given it to fetch breath and recover spirits & life again.

4. It puts men upon the exercise of Patience. Impatience under sorrow, makes it to be a great deal more burdensome than otherwise it would be: now the genuine fruit of Hope is patience: when expectation is raised in a man, it puts him upon waiting, and makes him quiet in waiting; and this is proportionable to the degrees that hope hath arrived to; so that when the good expected is certain to come without fail, and there

there is a clear prospect that when it doth come, it will make a full compensation for all the trouble which hath been sustained, together with the removal of it from him; a comfortable perswasion that it shall be so, makes him to be earnestly looking out for it, and to satisfy himself for the present with the expectation of it. This may suffice for the consideration of Hope in general; it follows to enquire.

2: What ground of Hope the people of God have, concerning their *Dead*, more then other men have.

A. The Apostle here intimates concerning others, that they have none at all: not as if there were none but Gods children that make any pretence to an hope concerning such as these. If we speak of the Heathen Nations, to which our Text hath a more immediate respect, they entertained divers sentiments concerning the state of the dead, and made answerable improvement of these notions. The *Epicurean* Sect indeed thought man to be utterly mortal; their tenent was *Cum sumus, non est mors; cum mors est, non sumus*. And hereupon they pleased themselves with this, that death puts an end to all miseries: But the *Platonists* held the Immortality of the soul, and the communion of souls in a future state, and would take a great deal of satisfaction in the

the forethoughts of that happy day when they should come to enjoy one another again in a better condition. The Peripatericks also verged this way, though not without some hesitancy. But as to the Resurrection of the Body, it agreed not with their principles, and seemed an impossibility to their way of reasoning, and therefore they exploded it with all manner of scoffs and scorns: If we speak of the visible profession of Christianity, and such as have been acquainted with the Word of God, these do for the generality acknowledge the same Truths upon which the Hope of Gods Children is built, and do also support themselves with such Hope from the consideration thereof, as affords them a great deal of present quiet. But the intendment of the expression is, that there are none else but the people of God who have a good ground for their Hope; that all others, how confident soever they may be, do build without a foundation.

Now if we would take a right scantling of this matter, there are three things which must be considered in conjunction?

1. The persons hoping; and they are such as are not barely Christian by profession, but are also true believers in State. For tho^o this hope is offered to all persons where the Gospel comes, yet there are none that have really embraced it but they, and though

the goodness of the person hoping, doth not contribute any thing to the good estate of the person for whom this hope is conceived, (for every one must be saved by his own faith, and not that of another, which is of Gods free-giving, and not of our meriting,) yet there is an hope which godly men may entertain with respect unto their dead, which others cannot do upon the same reason : yea and there are arguments of comfort to be drawn from their hope, by such as these, which others cannot derive unto themselves without falsehood ; as will be made to appear in the sequel of this discourse.

2. *The persons hoped for : they are such as sleep : i. e. such as we have any grounded hope concerning, that they died in Christ ; and this is not the lot of all men ; nor yet of all such as live under the Dispensation of Gospel Ordinances, and have been externally related to the Covenant : and it is a thing very evident that the hope here intended hath all its strength from Christ ; and therefore the thing hoped must derive from an interest in him, and by consequence it must hold proportion with the reason which we had to conclude that they had such an interest, for, to be without Christ, and to be without hope, do run parallel, Eph. 2. 12.*

3. *The things upon which our Hope feeds itself concerning them, and from which it supplies*

plies us with our consolation: and they must be such things as are in themselves hopeable, and upon a presumption that they shall come to pass, do contain matter of good consolation in them. Now that which must comfort us in our mourning for those that are dead, must give us particular relief against those very things which are the grounds of our Sorrow: and the proper reason of this sorrow is, a supposed loss which there is sustained by their death: and this must be either with respect to our selves, or unto them: That which is with respect unto our selves is, that we have lost them, and that which refers unto them is that they are lost: here-upon the evil which we apprehended to be suffered by this loss, is that by which we take the measure of our sorrows: all the hope then which we can entertain about it, either that the thing is not so as we think, or that it is not so bad as we did suspect it to be, will give us mitigation here: and that is it which we are to make enquiry after. Let us then for the present take it for granted upon supposition, that we that are Mourners are true believers; and they for whom we are in mourning, are such as are dead in Christ: and in this case, the Word of God is fully stored with abundant provision to establish our Hope, against those very things which Christians are wont to make the greatest arguments of their grief.

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Here then observe,

1. This Hope doth not take away all occasion of mourning wholly from us; because there is undoubtedly a present grievous loss sustained by us; we are losers by the Death of all such as a temporal respect: for we are bereaved of their desirable and delectable company; we can no farther enjoy them, and solace ourselves with them in this life; we have no hopes ever to see them any more among the living; all the benefit which we had by their sweet company, pleasant entercourses or whatsoever was dear to us in their presence with it, is now utterly gone, and we must see their faces and hear their voices no more; yea and many times there is a great deal of the sense of the anger of God imprinted upon our minds, upon the taking of such away from us; and a sad and sorrowful remembrance is left behind of the fearful provocation that we had given to God to bereave us, and that carries a sad and smarting sting in it, which makes deep wounds in our consciences, and ingeminates our grief. And they are lost also as to themselves in many respects. They are lost in respect of the present life, which is in it self a very desirable blessing, but now they are cut off from it, and it may be in the very bud, or in the blossom of their age, before they have had the opportunities to do much of their work; and their bodies are lost as to any capacity of being serviceable to their souls in their natural employments and rational services, being now laid

against excessive Sorrow.

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laid by in a rotting grave, deprived of all life and motion, they are therefore lost as to any farther opportunity of glorifying God among the living: might they have been spared and suffered to have lived a little longer, they might have been precious instruments of the Honour of God, been capable of doing much good in their generation, and how much would this also have also tended to their everlasting benefit; but now they are lost as to all this, the dead praise thee not, &c. Psal. 115. 17. and these things do carry evil, and matter of mourning in them but.

2. There is something to compensate this loss which our Hope may safely stay it self upon; and that both in consideration of our selves and of them too; neither is our nor their case desperate or irreparable: it may be made up, the loss repaired in a good measure for the present, and to be sure in measure full and running over for the future, and what more is there to be desired to make our hope full? here then;

1. For the present there is good Hope, and that

1. In respect of our selves in waiting for the accomplishment of that Promise, Rom. 8. 28. all things shall work together for good to them that love God. The Apostle is there speaking of afflictions, and the loss of friends and relations is none of the least of these. God is able to repair us to the full and running

ning over, and that both by his Grace and his comfort, he can sanctifie such a loss to us for our very great gain : there is many a Child of God that finds honey in this Lion : they are by such a Providence weaned a great deal more from Creatures, and drawn nearer unto God ; they experience how poor things these are to lean upon or make the objects of our delight, and to find that none but God can be a portion suitable and sufficient : God also useth this to put them upon serious reflection upon their former ways and courses ; and leads them to repentance and reformation of those things that had provoked God thus to deal by them : they learn to love earth the less, and heaven the more by this, and accordingly they are put upon the pursuit of heavenly things with intenseness ; and this is an exceeding great benefit ; and God is able to reveal more of himself to their souls upon it, and give them spiritual comforts in the room of temporal, the light of his countenance in exchange for the delight which they had in the creature ; and God is frequently wont thus to do, which is a very happy and advantageous exchange to them.

1. With regard to them who are Dead. Though a lifeless body, which they leave upon our hands lying by the Walls, to be commended to the cold and silent Grave, where

where it must be entertained with Worms and Rottenness, and be turned into putrefaction and dust, are sad entertainments to our Melancholy thoughts; yet God hath provided our hope with a comfortable repast for the present, when we look off from this sad spectacle, and remember that their immortal soul no sooner took their flight from their dying bodies, but they immediately fell into the hands of glorious Angels, and were by them royally guarded to the Palace of delight, and are now sweetly entertained in the bosome and embraces of the Lord Jesus Christ; perfectly freed from all sin and sorrow, which shall never more molest them; filled with joys and pleasures in that blessed Kingdom: that they went from hence directly into *Paradise*, and are now, whiles we are in heaviness for them, singing of endless *Hallelujahs*: that they have but broken their prison, and obtained the greatest and most blessed enlargement: that their better part now lives, and is with Christ which is best of all. And this for the present.

2. For the Future: And here there is a victorious Hope in both the forementioned respects: and there are more especially three Articles of the Christian Religion, which affords life and nourishment to this hope, all of which are urged by our Apostle in the context of this

this Chapter, for the whetting on of his Exhortation upon these he writes to ; and they are of equal use to the People of God, in all the Ages of the World.

1. The Happy Resurrection which all those that sleep in Christ shall partake in. It is true, all the Dead, both good and bad shall rise again ; but ungodly men have no hope in the Resurrection: nor yet their friends for them on this account ; because their rising is only in order to their having the more fearful fall : whereas the Resurrection of the Just is a Doctrine full of all Consolation this therefore is urged, context, verse, 14. *them that Sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* And it is greatly enlarged upon, in,

1. Cor. 15, Where both the thing it self is asserted, and the precious qualities of it are declared. For Gods people to think with full perswasion that these very bodies which we had been so intimate withal, and of whose Communion we are now deprived shall not only rise, but so rise as is described, verse, 42. 43. Changed so exceedingly for the better, is a very precious thought : the Psalmist thought this truth believed and pondered by him, was enough to make his *flsh to rest in hope, Psal. 16.* 10. he thought he could dye chearfully : well then may we quiet ourselves in hope, concerning them, by observing and believing
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ing what a change for the better shall then be made.

2. Their happy meeting of Christ when he shall come to the last Judgement. That he will so come, the Scriptures of truth have given in a full Testimony unto: that all these shall meet him at his coming, is asserted, *context. ver. 15.* where it is given as another ground of Consolation to the Children of God: and there is a great deal of reason for it, because they shall then meet him in the quality of his Favourites and Redeemed ones. It is true they shall meet him as their Judge; but this also is their great Priviledge, because he will then come to acquit them from all that was here laid to their charge, openly to Justify them, to declare them to be his redeemed, to *confess them before his glorious Angels*, and to adjudge them to be the heirs, and appoint them to the possession of that Kingdom, and those felicities which he hath purchased and provided for their everlasting entertainment: others indeed shall meet Christ at his Tribunal, and there they shall be judged by him, but it is to be condemned, to receive a fearful Sentence, adjudging them to eternal misery; whereas these being acquitted, shall be made honourable Assessors with Christ in his Judging the world, 1 Cor. 6. 2.

3. Their everlasting abode with him in

his glorious Kingdom, after the Judgment is over; this encouragement is expressed, Context, verse 17. *and so shall we be ever with the Lord*; when Jesus Christ shall have finished that great Affair, and that High Court shall be broken up, then shall he return to Heaven again, attended with the pompous Train of Holy Angels, which waited upon him in that Transaction, together with all his Redeemed Saints, who in Soul and Body shall go with him to the heavenly Kingdom, and there be filled for ever with his presence, and be made blessed by his Communion through all Eternity; where as all others shall be excluded from his Presence, and suffer everlasting miseries in that Separation. Now these hopes are sufficient to swallow up all sorrows, and to dry up our tears, at least to keep them within the bounds of a due moderation, in either respect. now is the happy time when we shall come together again, and when we are there met, we shall part no more: and then our mutual frictions shall be entirely perfect, and without any dregs or mixtures of sorrow or fear; we with them being together made compleatly blessed in the full enjoyment of all that which we have hoped for: and here lies the strength of a believers hope in this respect: The things themselves which are to feed and nourish it are full

full, and there is nothing wanting in them; and they are also certain with respect to all those that are so qualified, as we have been considering; we have the infallible Testimony of the Spirit of God recorded in the Holy Scriptures giving us a full confirmation of these things.

But there is a great enquiry which still remains, and it is about the strength of this hope in reference to the Subject about which it is to be conceived by us: Though the things themselves be indubitable conclusions concerning all such as are so qualified; yet what room is there to exercise this hope in particular, respecting this and that person? and how may our sorrow be moderated thereby? for, suppose we our selves are true believers, and consequently heirs of the Promise, yet except we have some encouragement to hope and believe that those who are gone, *died in Christ*, we must remain hopeless concerning them. I know that there are divers serious Souls, that would desirously have something be offered for their satisfaction in this great case; I shall therefore endeavour to discuss it according to Scripture Light; and to make way for a more full resolution, let these things be premised.

1. That Christian Hope is a Grace which is exercised by the influence of Faith. Faith

is the leading Grace of all those that are wrought in Sanctification, and a Child of God lives by it, *Hebr. 10. 38.* the Just shall live by his Faith i. e. it is to influence the hope of a Christians conversation: it is that whereby he depends upon Christ, and by the promise, derives from him all that which enableth him to serve God in the improvement of every vertue that is in him: and this is that which principally makes Christianity to differ from meer morality: Hope must have its grounds, and Gods people must have the help of Faith to establish them on these grounds.

2. Hence we infer, that a Believers hope hath a good foundation to build upon, which it is fully assured of. For if it be built upon Faith, it hath the same foundation, in the bottom with Faith, and that must needs have its Evidence in it, which supposeth assurance: for that cannot be called Evidence or Demonstration, which is not sure; hence we have that Encomium given to Faith, *Heb. 11. 1.* it is the Evidence of things not seen; i. e. it gives a full discovery that the things hoped for, though they lie out of our present sight, are not meer suppositions, but realities. If there were not a certain future happy estate of the People of God, if this proposition were not infallibly true, both with respect to the thing, and also to the subjects for whom it is provided,

Faith

Faith could give unto Hope no evidence at all; but these things are unquestionably true, being confirmed by the Testimony of him who cannot lie; so that the Doctrines forementioned are not things that may come under dispute, but are confidently to be believed by all that will not deny their Religion: and these are they which hope makes use of,

3. That the application of this Hope is in respect of something future. For such a thing, we observed, is the proper object of hope, according to that of the Apostle, Rom. 8. 24. Hope that is seen, is not Hope, for what a man sees, why doth he yet hope for? There is something that is expected to come, upon the assurance of these premises; and that is the eternal felicity of such as are under the shadow of this promise: either they are not yet happy, or we are not as yet fully assured that they are; either the thing is future, or our perfect knowledge of it is so; and we are in the mean while encouraging of our selves by this Hope.

4. This application is not in respect of every one for whom we Hope, of equal evidence. Though the general Rule of faith be sufficiently Demonstrable, viz. that all the Dead are blessed which dy in the Lord: yet the particular inference of hope, hath its different degrees with respect to the persons concerning whom it is exercised: and the reason of this difference lieth here, because

we have not a like evidence of the being of the thing in those whom we hope for, which is the reason of our Hope; for,

1. In regard to our selves, we may have a sensible assurance of our future good estate: such as may set us down fully satisfied, and which shall not deceive us: Paul could say, *we know*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *and we are always confident*, ver. 6. I do not say that every true believer hath this apprehensively; godly men have many clouds that intercept this light, and there are some *that sit in darknes*; but he may have it, it is a thing attainable, and he hath the grounds of it in him. That every one that dies in the faith shall rise again in a glorious state, meet Christ coming to Judgment with comfort, and live for ever in his presence, is certain; now they that are united to Christ by a living faith, shall assuredly so dy: and there are these discoveries to be made of the truth of this faith which are undeceiving, for it hath its properties which belong to it, and are no where else to be found; they are *the things which accompany salvation*: so that upon the experience of them in himself, a believer may safely assume, and say, I am united to Christ, *by a faith certain*, and therefore I shall rise in glory, stand in the Judgment, and eternally possess the incorruptible Inheritance.

2. In respect of others the case is far otherwise: for though the *Hypothesis* is certain, viz. if they are in Christ, then all the felicity we have heard of is their portion; yet the *Assumption* is not directly of Faith which always hath the Divine Testimony to confirm it, but of charity, for.

1. No man can infallibly know anothers good estate without divine revelation. The differencing notes by which Sincerity and Hypocrisy are to be distinguished are latent; God only knows them certainly. A man may make a great shew, and carry it with a great deal of strict preciseness, and yet be rotten within. There are a great many that profess and walk orderly for along time, and yet they fall at last into some foul Apostasy; and it is not to be questioned but that there are others that never discover themselves to the world, but go off fairly to our apprehension, who yet dissembled, and deceived others, and it may be themselves too. The day will discover many mistakes and wrong guesses that were here made by the most discerning Christians. It is Gods alone prerogative to judge the heart.

2. There are greater hopes concerning some than others, of some there are such probabilities as give us a great deal of settled satisfaction concerning them: their lives are so holy, their

Testimonies

Testimonies are so clear, their conversation so shining, that we hope without any doubt concerning them, having as much to set us down, as can rationally be expected for our satisfaction in their good state, others give only slight and more weak encouragements to our hope, and mix it with many occasions of fear and jealousy concerning them: and yet hope hath at least so much to say, that there is some probability, at least a possibility that they may be well; and this gives some relief, though not so much as the other.

5. This Hope is only given us for our present support in this life. The truth is there will be no occasion for it afterwards. The Children of God are while they live here very anxious and sollicitious about the everlasting estate of their friends and relations; they know a great deal more then others do, concerning the terrors of the Lord, and the affairs of another world, and their natural affection put them upon much inquisitiveness about them; the present thoughts which they have of their being under the impression of those doleful miseries that are denounced in the curse, are killing thoughts, and they cannot tell how to support their spirits under them, but they are ready to sink, God is therefore pleased to afford them this Hope for their present relief. When a Child of God is made perfect, as he shall then

Be fully informed and assured about these things; so he shall be compleatly satisfied in them; there shall be no unruly unmortified affections then to be wrested withal, but an entire acquiescence in the Justice and Righteousness of God: and as there will be no more room for hope, either for one or for another, because every ones state shall be put beyond it, so there will be no occasion for it: but whilst we are here in this life, there is no doing without it, God hath therefore set it before us, together with the grounds of it, and they that make a right improvement, shall never be ashamed of it: the use of our hope, is not to do them any good, for they are gotten past the advantage of receiving any benefit by us; but it is to do our selves good, and it serves suitably to that end, when it is helpful to put us into a quiet and submissive frame to the hand of God upon us.

6. We are to rest in the revealed will of God for our Hope; and not to pry into his secret will: It is to be granted; that concerning our selves, we may come to know our Election by our vocation, and we ought to endeavour to arrive to that assurance; 2 Pet. 1. 10. but we can have no such knowledge concerning others. We are apt to say, oh! if we were but sure of their well-being, we could then be quiet and contented; but this is to fight against God: it is his pleasure

to keep these things secret for the present; and it is good for us that he so doth, we are not fit to be acquainted with the particular estate of these and those in another life; when we are, we shall know; and that will be when there are no more remainders of flesh and corruption in us. In the Interim, God hath so far revealed his mind unto us in his word, as to give us those grounds of hope, in which we ought to bear up, and comfort, at least sustain our souls; but we must ever remember that of, Deut. 29. 29. the secret things belong to God. It is Gods will that we should pry no farther, than into his word, for our direction; and it is our duty to comply with his will, and there can be no profit in doing otherwise.

7. All the Arguments of our Hope, are to be fetched from the new Covenant. It is in that Covenant that the only foundation for fallen mans hope is laid: It is one Epithete that is put upon that legal estate, or the relation which men have to the first Covenant, that it is *without Hope*, Eph. 2. 12. The unhappy fall hath brought the whole race of mankind under the sentence of Condemnation: man, woman, and child are so many dead persons according to the tenour of that Covenant: the curse of Death is fallen upon them, which hath bound them over to the suffering of all misery. It is in the new Gospel Covenant that life and immortality

ality are brought to light ; and as the only way to Salvation is there made known to us, so the foundation upon which Salvation is to be hoped for, is there alone to be found & it is according thereunto that we have solid encouragement.

From hence therefore I shall endeavour to draw those Rules upon which our hope is to Proceed in the Present case. And here also there are two sorts about whom we are wont to be concerned and very thoughtful, viz. such as dy in their infancy, and such as dye adult, or after they are come to years of understanding : I shall speak of each distinctly.

1. Concerning Children that dye in their infancy. I understand all that age wherein they are not grown up to these years of knowledge, wherein they are able to improve the word of God, and the ordinances of the Gospel, for the good of their own Souls, in the ordinary course of Gods providence ; for some extraordinary instances are not here to be drawn into a general Rule. There is great reason why we should not mourn for these as that have no Hope ; for there is a great deal to be pleaded, and that which is abundantly satisfying, upon their score. And we may take a brief discovery of it in these particulars.

1. Negatively take these three Conclu

sions.

1. That Saving Grace is not absolutely tied to the visible covenant. It doth not ascertain Conversion and Salvation to every one that is under it. The Gospel Covenant requires such conditions to be found in us, as God alone is able to work by Almighty power; and he is Sovereign in his dispensations; *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, Rom. 9. 8.* His Grace is free. So that being in the Covenant and under the terms of it, doth it not make an infallible truth that such an one must & shall be Saved. We know that God hath a Glory for his revenging Justice, as well for his Grace, to be gained in his visible Church; there are therefore threatnings as well as promises put into the Covenant; and the promises themselves are Conditional, and will argue no farther than from the Condition being wrought in the person, which God is not under any positive engagement to this or that person to do it for him:

2. The innocency of Children cannot save them. Nor is it any reason or ground of Salvation: It is not that which makes any impression, or becomes any motive on the heart of God to save them rather than others. It is then a very poor Hope that is built upon this Consideration. This, as it raiseth prejudices in some at the providence of

of God to think that such poor innocents must dy, and they are ready to murmur on this account; so it is the strength of the Hope of a great many other; they comfort themselves after such a manner, poor Babes! they never did any harm in this world, Innocent Lambs that never sinned in their lives, surely then God cannot but pity and have mercy upon them; and is this all? alas! there is no reason nor plea at all in this. *Babylon's Children* were every whit as innocent as ours are, and yet see what is declared concerning them, *Psal. 137. ult.* By innocence we can intend truly no more but only this, viz. that they never actually did any harm, that they have not committed any actual sin since they were born; and this is a very poor sort of innocence: why did they not so do? it was because they could not; they were not arrived to a capacity of doing either good or hurt: as not having the liberty or power of using their rational faculties for the performing of Humane acts: but in the mean while let us remember, they were only *innocent vipers*, that were as full of the poyson and malignity of sin as ever they could hold, and would have vented this venome of theirs as soon as they had gotten a little strength and understanding; we should soon have seen what brood they were of; and therefore in themselves deser-

deserved to be killed in the nest; we are told what all *Adams* posterity are, in their birth, *Psal. 58. 3. they are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies; and what an innocency is this?*

3. Nor can the piety of the parents merit the application of saving grace to the Children. God is not obliged or brought in debt unto us, by any thing of ours. We ourselves when we have done all we can, and served God with the greatest integrity, are still *saved by grace, Eph. 2. 8.* And so must our Children too: God hath the liberty to do with his own what he will, we cannot be before hand with him. They greatly err, who think that infants are saved by the Faith of their Parents, as the Condition of their salvation; much less can it be the procuring cause of it: The qualification to which Salvation is ascertained, or the condition required in the new covenant in order to Salvation must be found. Habitually at least, in every one that partakes in the good of it; *The Just shall live by his Faith;* and as a godly Parent can neither Propagate it by Generation, nor produce it by all his most careful endeavours, so neither can he make God a Debtor of it to his Children by any thing that he can do, for *when he hath done all he is*

an unprofitable Servant, hath done but his duty,
Luk. 17. 10.

2. Positively, take these following conclusions :

1. That godly parents have a better hope concerning their Children than those that are Unconverted. Though both are in the Gospel Covenant outwardly, and under the external dispensations of it: and though a gracious man can no more merit for his Children than an ungracious man; nor can he any more work saving grace in them than the other; yet his hopes are far better than the other: and the reason of this is evident; because we have observed that the hope of Gods Children is a result of their faith; we are therefore said to be *be- gotten to a lively faith*, i. e. in *Regeneration*; The Hope of Godly ones is not a meer Affection, but a sanctified Affection; and therefore it cannot be but there where this sanctification is wrought.

Though God can as well save the Child of an unbeliever, as of the most eminent Saint in the world, yet the unbeliever cannot so well hope for it: and the reason is because this soul satisfying Hope, is a fruit of the spirit, and is wrought in none but such whom he sanctifies. An unregenerate man is under the Covenant threatning, and therefore all the Hopes that he maintains himself withal

withall in that state; are no better then presumptions; he is really under a curse, and so cannot challenge an interest in any promise; what hath he to do with Gospel Consolations; as long as he goes on in his Transgressions.

2. The more fruitful and conscientious Gods people are in their Duties to their Children. the stronger hopes they may entertain concerning them. There are some Duties which we ow to our Children in their Infaney; others are to be attended as they grow up to understanding: the former of these are under our present consideration. Now, though all our care and conscience that we exert in these Duties; cannot work the saving change in them; yet, as it is certain, that in order of the means; doing of duty is neeter to the blessing then the neglect of it; so a man hath a great deal more of inward tranquillity upon his mind, in the faithful discharge of it, than in the omission or flighty performance, *Psal. 119. 165. great peace have all they that keep thy law, and nothing shall offend them.* And because there is a connexion between the promise and the precept, the more fruitful we are in our obedience to God, the clearer is our evidence that the promise belongs unto us: Now there are Duties to and for our Infants: God hath put them under our care

Care, and expects this of us: They are to be presented to God in *Baptism*, that they may have the sign and the seal of his Covenant bestowed upon them: and they are to be continually brought to God in our ardent importunate prayers; and we are to begin early with tyem to instruct them, and drop into them the things of God, and the great things, of Salvation, according as they are capable of imbibing the same. The neglect of these things will not a little obstruct the exercise of our hope: it will be a great damp to our minds; to have such a reflection upon them as this, I did not so much as pray earnestly to God for the Soul of this Child, and now it is gone past all prayers. I do not say, that those of Gods people that have not been so solicitous as they ought, have no hope; God can give us hope too: but to be sure every such consideration will cast a damp upon our spirits.

3. *The Infants of Professing Parents are in the Gospel Covenant.* By professing Parents I understand, such as do openly own the truths of the Gospel; and do walk orderly in subjection to the Government of Christ therein appointed: and that the Children of such as are within the Vineyard, are brought under the terms of the Covenant, and priviledged with the outward benefit of it, is a great Scripture Truth, and a ground of abundance of consolation to the souls

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The Mourners Cordial

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of serious Parents, when they can look into the Word of God, and there satisfy themselves in this, that God hath so far owned their Children to be his, as to take them under the shadow of his Covenant. This was not only a privilege conferred upon Israel, in the days of the Old Testament; but it belongs to the visible Church in the days of the New Testament too: It belonged not restrictively to Moses's; pedagogy, but it was put into Abraham's Covenant, Gen. 17. 7, 9. It is therefore revived in the days of the Gospel, Acts 2. 39. the promise is to you and to your Children, 1 Cor. 7. 14. your Children are holy; and certainly it cannot but be some relief to a sorrowful Christian, when his Infant dies, to think with himself, this Child of mine was in Covenant with God; especially if he consider how much there is in this; and therefore,

4. That the direct aim of the New Covenant is life and Salvation. I do not say that all who are any way comprehended under it shall certainly obtain Salvation. the Scripture assures us that the case stands far otherwise: the fig tree which is planted in the vineyard may prove barren, and be a cumber to the ground, & for that reason may be cut down: the Gospel may, and very frequently doth eventually, prove to be a savour of death in them that perish, 2. Cor. 2. 15. 16. Many are at last found unbelievers and so procure Damnation

Damnation to themselves. But this is certain that God introduced the New-Covenant upo the deficiency of the Old-One, in point of being able to give life to fallen men, Gal. 3. 21, *If there had been a law that could have given life, verily Righteousness should have been by the law.* It was because man had destroyed himself, and there was no remedy provided for him in the first Covenant, that God revealed another in which there was one: and what could the direct aim of this be, but that a number of that unhappy race might be delivered from eternal death, and made partakers in Salvation? There was enough to destroy all mankind in the former Covenant, the curses of it were amazing: if it had not been for the Salvation which is provided in this it had never been promulgated; life therefore and immortality are said to be brought to light by the Gospel, 2. Tim. 1. 20. And this consideration also gives no little life to the Hope of Godly Parents: it must have some comfort in it, to think that the Covenant in which my Babe died, was a Covenant of life and peace. And yet farther.

5. That the Bap̄tism which is appointed for and applied unto infants is not to no purpose. It would be too large a digression here to infer what may be said to make it evident that infant Bap̄tism is a Divine institution, appointed by God to be applied to

to the Infants of his professing people: That they are included in Gods Covenant, and have the qualifications rendring them capable of this Ordinance, hath been so often and substantially made good against all the attempts that have been used to undermine this Doctrine, that I hope duly considerate persons will not call it in question: Now upon the supposition, which I reckon to be sufficiently evident, That these Infants are Baptised by Gods Command, and that this Baptism is a visible seal of the Gospel Covenant unto them, as Circumcision was of the Covenant of Grace under a more legal dispensation of it; certainly then God had some end in this appointment; for we know that he doth nothing, he commands nothing in vain: and this design must have a respect either to the Children, or to the Parents, or to both, mediately; and to the Glory of God ultimately: This very thing must bring some glory or other unto God, either from the one, or the other, or both. In respect of the Children who are made the Subjects of this Ordinance; we cannot readily conceive that it should encrease their Condemnation upon the supposition that they dy in their Infancy; and the reason is because, as they cannot understand the nature and design of it, so they are incapable of actually abusing it: and how it can possibly have a moral influence

Once upon them to draw them unto Christ, is beyond our ability to conceive, in as much as they have not any present knowledge of it: and a physical operation, it can have none at all, it being purely Sacramental: and we have reason to think that the Spirit of God worketh faith and holiness in them, at least habitually, immediately. In the Parents, it hath a very good end and design, viz. not only to lay them under a strong obligation of Duty, but also potently to encourage them to be strenuous in the doing of it, upon the good Hope which they do hence entertain, because it hath pleased God to make them his Sealed Ones, and to appoint that his name should be called upon them; and herein they glorify God, and the Apostle thought it a great encouragement to believing Parents for them to be acquainted that *their Children were holy*, 1 Cor. 7. 14: but still,

6. Infants dying in their Infancy cannot be charged with rejecting of Gods Covenant. It is true, *they are by nature Children of wrath as well as others*. They have a relation which they bear to the first Adam, and derive both Guilt and Pollution from him, by virtue whereof the Justice of God hath a righteous plea against them; they have a corrupt nature cleaving to them in their very conception and birth, and they sadly shew it as soon

soon as they come to a capacity of doing any humane actions. But if we look to the Gospel Covenant, which God hath seen meet in his Sovereign Pleasure to extend unto them, they have for the present done nothing at all against it: they have never despised a Saviour, nor turned their backs upon Salvation, they have never said unto Christ, depart from us: they have indeed a nature in them prone enough to do this; they have congregate principles which adhere to them by vertue of Original Sin, which would lead them unto all this in time, if not graciously prevented: but the act they are at present incapable of, and this also affords a good supply of encouragement unto parents, to consider that God hath taken away their Children before they ever did practically renounce his Covenant which he had taken them under; and hereby hath prevented them of having any such consideration to exercise their minds withal.

7. We no where read in the Scripture that the Children of Godly ones dying in their infancy did eternally perish. Tho' we know that Gods Electing Grace is free, and that there is no expresse word of promise upon this account, God having seen meet to reserve his own Counsels in this affair within his Bosome; yet there is this farther to encourage our hopes, that we do not find in the Word
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of God, either such a Doctrine delivered, or such an example recorded, that any one such did miscarry. That *David* had any particular revelation extraordinary we read not, (and we may well enough, according to the tenour of Faith suppose that he had not) about that Child of his, and yet, tho' it were begotten in Adultery, and he had followed that with Murder, and other grievous sins; upon his true repentance, and his fasting and praying in particular for that Child, he is enabled to Comfort himself with this Hope, 2. *Sam.* 12. 23. *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* For it would be a poor argument of comfort we must think him to draw, if we suppose he argued only from a consideration of his own Death; nor could he expect or desire to go to him, but upon the Hope that he was gone to Glory.

8. We are fully assured that there are multitudes of such as these are now in the kingdome: The word of God is very clear and plain for this: It was the argument which our Saviour Christ used to encourage their bringing of little children to him, when his Disciples would have prohibited them, *math.* 19. 13. 14. *of such is the kingdom of Heaven;* which text of Scripture assures us both that Jesus Christ hath a special favour for children, and that they are the Subjects of

of his Grace and Glory ; By the word [Such] cannot be meant such in quality, or disposition, as some would go about to put us off, for why did Christ take these little Children into his arms, & Bless them ? they whom he Blesseth are Blessed indeed : the meaning therefore plainly is, of such as dy in that age, that are taken away in their Infancy : and there is a great deal of reason to draw this inference from it, that there are more of that than of any other Age, in Heaven.

9. And they are not incapable of haveing the Gospel condition wrought in them, it is true, they are not in a capacity of being regenerated by the ordinary means which are appointed for the conversion of adult persons ; they cannot attend upon the Preaching of the word, they cannot be taught by the counsels and instructions of parents, because they are not able to understand any thing in this way ; but there are some means which they are capable of having used for them, and because God hath appointed them, we may hope for his Blessing upon them ; they may be Baptized, and they may be prayed for ; and the Spirit of God is able to do all that for them which they want in order to their being made meet for the Inheritance. They have Humane Souls which are Subjects capable of being Sanctified, and purged by his Holy Operation upon them ; and tho

he hath tied us to the use of the means according to our advantage, yet he is not himself tied up, so as not to do it for them : Divines Generally suppose that *Jeremiah*, and *John Baptist*, were Sanctified in the womb : I dispute it not, but I am sure this is not too hard for God, & he hath done it, because there are many such Glorified.

10. And there have been some Children that even in their Infancy made a good discovery of their seriousness, according to the measure of their capacity of understanding the things of God, yea and beyond what could ordinarily be supposed to have been in them : though their understanding hath been small, yet there hath appeared in them the favour of some breathings after Christ, herein hath God been pleased to shew his power ; Possibly *Jeroboams* Son was such an one; in whom *There was some good towards the Lord God of Israel.* And this also is a great encouragement to Hope ; and when all these things are put together, they will certainly afford matter of reif.

2. We may now proceed to consider this with respect to adult persons. Or such as dy after they are grown up to years of understanding ; and see what Hope there is which we may entertain ourselves withal concerning them, and how far there may be the exercise of it for our support under the sorrow

that we feel for the loss of them : and here I shall first give some general Rules, and afterwards apply them to the particular respects In general then.

1. That the Covenant promise is made to man upon Condition. . . It hath been already observed : that it is the New-Covenant which gives men all their hopes : from thence they do derive ; Now that as well as the Old-one, is a conditional Covenant. The Promise, according as it is revealed in the Gospel, is not absolute, it is not there declared to be made to these and those men particularly and personally, but it is offered unto all where the Gospel comes, upon terms which are proposed for their acceptance : and Indeed it could not be a Covenant Promise if it did not bear such a tenour : for it is Essential to a Covenant that it always hath in it a mutual stipulation. Gods Decrees are absolute but his Covenant, in which he transacts with the Children of men, is exhibited with Articles in it, which are proposed, in which God requires of men that they should thus do and makes a promise of Salvation to them upon their compliance with him ; thus therefore were the Apostles commanded to Preach the Gospel, *Mark. 16. 15. 16.* And thus *Paul* proposeth it in *Rom. 8. 13.* The Precept therefore and the promise connected together exhibit the Covenant.

2. That except this Condition be wrought in them, they cannot be saved. That without it they cannot lay any claim unto salvation; and there is neither injury nor false dealing in God, if he with-hold it from them: this is very evident, because the Gospel promise which is declared unto men, hath brought him no farther under obligation unto them, than according to the terms of it. If he should deny Salvation unto him that doth believe, he would not be so good as his word, because he hath ingaged it to all such, and made it their encouragement to believe, Joh. 3. 16. *that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life;* but if he with-hold it from an unbeliever, he is just, because he hath not performed the condition upon which it was tendered to him. But besides this, there is no hope that he ever will save such an one; nay he cannot bestow salvation upon any without the condition wrought in them: no unbeliever can be saved in his unbelief, because God should be equally false to his Creature in saving such an one, as in denying Salvation to the other; in as much as there is a Covenant threatening which includes this man in it, and hath something to say to him which must be accomplished upon him, and that is, *he must be damned, Mark 16. 16.* there is no room therefore for any indulgence

gence to such an one, nor will Gods Holiness or Truth allow of it.

3. This also must be before they dy. The working of the Gospel condition in us, depends upon the Grace of God, and except he puts it in, to us we shall never have it: and he gives to none but here in this life, this is the only accepted time, and day of salvation; there is no business to be done in the grave, and nothing of this nature left to be accomplished in another world; now only is working time, then every one comes to have his reward, and that is to be distributed to every one according to the things done in the flesh, 2 Cor. 1. 10. Death disposeth of men to their everlasting Unchangeable Estate. It puts an end to the Gospel treaty, and brings every man to, and lodgeth him in that place from whence he shall return no more.

4. The reality of this work is a secret which no other can infallibly discern: The Saving change in a man is something inward: the sincerity of it lies in the heart; and that must be much out of our knowledge; It is Gods alone prerogative to Search and judge of that. All that lives within our compass to do about it, is at most but conjectural, and the best conclusion that we can draw, is no more than that it is strongly probable that it may be so: though saving grace hath its marks or characters, yet because they are spiritual, there is none that can certainly know them, but he that gives them, and he
that

that hath received them: But as to what is visible to us. Grace hath its counterfeit; and there are those that can ape it so handsomely, that a discerning Christian, with all his observation cannot see into the imposture: & by reason of this, there is many a false Hypocrite that passeth with him for a sincere Christian, and many an upright soul, because of his great infirmities is suspected by him, he doubts of him whether he be right or no.

5. Yet there are the fruits of this change which are brought forth by such as live after their Conversion. They can bring forth nothing before, for where there is no grace, there can be no exercise of it; and if they dy immediately upon it, as it may be presumed that some do, they are deprived of the opportunity to discover it in an holy life, and God will accept of the will, and not deny his own Grace which he hath created in them by his Almighty power; but if they are spared, and have a season allowed to them, they will more or less discover some encouraging symptoms of a work of God wrought in their hearts, by a life and conversation ordered according to the will of God, therein shewing forth the virtues of him that hath called them. They are regenerated to this end; and the Spirit of God will aid them in it; and so far as we discover any of these things, our hope will receive

a lift from thence, to conclude that they have received the Grace of God, and that therefore the well ordered and Everlasting Covenant is made with them; and the inferences which we shall draw from thence must needs be comfortable.

6. Hence, as these fruits are more or less apparent, so will the strength of our hope concerning them be more or less. This being the ground of the Evidence which affords to our hope its support, it can be no stronger than the ground is upon which it is built: and because this doth not shew it self forth in all alike, our hopes concerning them must have different degrees of clearness and comfortableness; concerning some therefore we can have but weak and faint hopes, and those that are mixt with a great deal of fear and suspicion; whereas in respect of others they are strong, prevailing, comforting and satisfying hopes, which enable us to rejoyce in them, and rest with abundance of quiet upon our spirits, that it is now well with them, and that their Change is for the better. The particular application of these things will now follow.

1. There are some who have been Religious from their very Childhood, and held on so until their death. They began early to seek after God, and have led a pious and exemplary life ever since, faithfully serving of God in a careful and conscientious observing of his commands; they have not on-
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ly been blameless, but patterns for others imitation: they have made a good Profession, and brought a great deal of Honour to God in their place and generation, their light hath so shined that men have seen their good works and glorified God for them. They have cheerfully both done and suffered for Christ: have been exceeding watchful over themselves, & taken a great deal of heed in the discharging of all relative and personal Duties incumbent on them, in obedience to God: and meanwhile have solemnly professed to renounce utterly all reliance upon themselves or their own righteousness, depending upon Christ alone for the acceptance of their persons and services: and they have lived very humbly as well as Conscientiously. When such as these are come to dy there is abundant Hope concerning them, for they have all the discoveries upon them, by which we are advantaged to Judge of mens being truly pious, and in a good estate: these are the visible Characters which the Scripture gives us to look upon as the notes of good and Holy men, yea of such as are eminently so: they do therefore command this Hope from us, they leave a precious name behind them, their very memory is blessed, and we have a good confidence concerning them; & tho it is not impossible but that men may dissemble Holiness so artificially as to impose up-
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on the credit of the Godly, and the dissimulation never be discovered in this life, yet we have no reason to suspect such as these, or to entertain doubts and jealousies in our minds about them, since there is nothing else to be seen by us in them, but what calls for our good opinion of them. Our Saviour Christ directs us to Judge of them by *their fruits Math. 7. 16. they keep faith and a good conscience to our observation; and such as these are declared to be happy in their Death, Psal. 37. 37. Take notice of the perfect man, mark the upright for the end of that man is peace.*

2. Others there be who have had a very great visible change wrought upon them. It may be they have spent a great part of their life in vanity and debauchery; they wasted away their youthful dayes in folly, and spent many of their riper years in notorious wickedness; they lived in a woful neglect of Duty, and would not hearken to the Counsels given them whether in private or in publick; they have fallen into gross and scandalous sins, such as Drunkenness Whoredom, Theft, Sabbath-Breaking, Scoffing at Godliness, &c. And they refused to be reformed, they would not bear to be reprov'd, but would rail, and revile at those that offered to check them in their Career's, But God at length met with them in their Career, and stop't them in it, knockt

knockt them down, as he did *Paul*, brought them to his foot, made them to taste the bitterness of their sin, humbly and thoroughly to confess and bewail all their former follies, and utterly to renounce them with their whole heart, and to betake themselves to him in Christ for pardon and healing: and hereupon there is a very notable change apparent in them to the observation of all they converse with; they do now as much hate their sins as formerly they delighted in them, and they are as eagerly set for the ways of God and Holiness, as formerly they slighted and abominated them; and are as zealously engaged to promote the interest of Christ in the world, as they sometimes were to serve the designs of Satan and their own lusts. An eminent instance of such an one was *Manassah*; see 2 Chron. 33. begin. compare, verse 15, 16. and though *Paul* were not a Debauch, yet he had been a virulent enemy of Christ, see what he saith of himself, 1 Tim. 1. 19. and yet afterwards he laboured for Christ, more than all the Apostles; 1 Cor. 15. 10. and indeed there is no one in the world that affords more matter for hope than such an one; there being so eminent a change brought about in him from one contrary to another, that it must needs be so much the more observable: and although it is not to be denied but that legal convictions

tions and terrors, may work a great moral change in a mans Conversation, without the production of a real saving change in his heart; yet it speaks to us as fair for it as any one thing that we can know: the Church glorified God for Paul, when they heard what an alteration was made in him, *Gal. 1. 24.* and such as these will be illustrious instances of the rich Grace of God in the great day of Accounts: when therefore such persons dy, we may and ought to have strong hopes concerning them.

3. There are some who only lead a sober and civil life among men. They make no great open profession of piety, they are not in their carriage and deportment of themselves, zealous for the promoting of the interest of Religion, though they discover nothing against it, but shew a favour for it; they live honestly and quietly among men; they are neither drawn into dissaberies with lewd men, nor to the strict duties of piety with Godly men; though they attend upon the commodities of Religion: thus they live, and thus they dy; there is very little can be said for them, and very little against them. Concerning such as these let these two things be observed.

1. Here is very little if any ground for a positive and concluding Hope concerning such as these are. And why? because there wants something that is positive for such an Hope

Hope to build upon : and such as the ground are, such the Hope must needs be. It is certain that where there is no Saving Grace wrought in men, there is no Foundation of Salvation laid in them; and Grace, wherever it is, is an active principle : and altho' it be not alike active in all men, yet it can no further appear than we make the discovery of the actings of it, or of something that carries such a resemblance in it, that we are able to argue concluding and affirmatively concerning any : If we know nothing by them, it follows that we can determine nothing concerning them. Restraint from enormous sins, and doing of moral duties to men among whom they live, and maintaining of a form of Godliness & practised duties in the profession of Religion, as, going to hear the word preached, reading the Scriptures and praying in the Family, and externally Sanctifying the Sabbath : though they are in themselves commendable, yet they are such common things among professors, that they speak very little positively, especially where in conjunction with them there is nothing made of any thing more than a kind of indifference.

2. Yet there is a considerable deal of a negative Hope that may be entertained for such as these ; in as much as they have had a great deal of Gods restraining Grace on them, and though

though that may be where there is no Saving Grace, yet many times it is a fruit of such an inward principle: Besides, there is corruption in the best, and that many times hath not only a great influence into, but also much of Prevalency upon the natural temper or constitution which is in men. There are some constitutions in men, which will make a great deal of shew with a little Grace and there are others that can make but a very small appearance of a great deal: and if we give to men these allowances, which Christian Charity requires from one to another, we may lawfully Hope, that there might be the root of the matter in them, although they did not make so great a discovery of it as could have been desired.

4. Some there be whose conversation is good and commendable, and their profession is very desirable: only they stand off from holding Communion with the Church of Christ at the Lords Table: and under this circumstance they live and dy: and there are too many who so do, and this consideration becomes a stumbling block, and occasion of many heart searchings in their friends when they come to dy in this Condition: and truly it is not without a great deal of reason: for out of doubt it is a duty incumbent on all adult persons living under the

against excessive sorrow.

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the means of Grace, and making profession of the true Religion, not to rest satisfied without a due preparation for, and actual fellowship in all the ordinances of the Gospel: every one that is at years of discretion. who turns his back upon a Sacrament, doth therein offer an open contempt to the Lord Jesus Christ. If he be not fitted for it, *the sin lies at his own door*, if he be and doth not come, how can he answer it? and therefore it must needs bring a cloud upon all his other profession, which will much darken it: and for a person to live and dy under the neglect of a known duty, and that of so great importance as this is, which Christ hath required every one that hath the least love for him, to attend upon *in remembrance of him*, hath not a little of reflection in it: many therefore, when they come to lie upon a Death-bed, have terrible agonies in their thoughts about it, and make little complaints against themselves upon the account, promising that if ever God gives them a further opportunity they will reform it: and if persons do live without this Communion contentedly, and carelessly, it speaks as much against them, as all their other Religious Conversation can speak for them: But still there may be that which will give encouragement to our Hope

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concerning such as do dy in such a condition as this.

1. If their abstinence from this Communion be not from contempt of the Ordinance, but a jealousie which they have concerning themselves, There are those that have upon them a deep sense that they want the benefit of this Ordinance, and that Jesus Christ hath made it their duty to seek after it; but they are possessed with a great deal of fear, they apprehend in themselves a great deal of unworthiness: and unfitness for such a thing as this; and they are afraid that if they should come they should abuse it, and thereby eat and drink their own *Damnation*: the danger of that affrights them, and they cannot tell how to get over it. Though this be sinful, yet it may be allowed by us to their infirmity, and that which they are striving against: yea it argues positively thus much, *viz.* that there is something of seriousness in these persons; and if God please to take them away before they can obtain to have their minds cleared and satisfied in this point, he knows how to pardon this infirmity to them.

2. If the Church Communion be clogged with unwarrantable terms. And such are all those that are not of Christs own instituting, what plausible pretence soever they may

may carry in them. There are some which men cannot comply with, unless they will sin against the precept directly; and there are others which men can see no warrant for their being required of them, nor can they find a willingness in their own minds to do such things as Jesus Christ hath nowhere made their Duty; and this keeps them off. For the former, their abstinence is their commendation, and that man who can live without the Sacrament, rather than defile his conscience for enjoyment of it, commends his sincerity to the Consciences of others. For the latter, I would say: though I verily believe that the terms of Communion are an Ordinance of Christ, and must have a word of Institution to warrant them, and that according to the Gospel, Orthodoxy in the profession of the Truths of the Christian Religion, under which is comprized a knowledge of these truths; and this attended with a *Conversion that becomes the Gospel of Christ*, is that which is the ground of our reputing them believers and receiving them into our fellowship: and whatsoever more is required as a *Test* is *supra* *Requiritum*; yet I also believe that there are some things, which, though not regularly required, may without sin be complied with, and never trouble him that doth so, either living or dying: and it will be no comfort in a dying hour to think, I kept my self off need-
lessly:

lessly: but here also there is hope, where it is not done upon open Contempt.

3. They have given Testimony on their Death-bed of their sincere Repentance of such neglects, and sought to God for his forgiveness of them through Christ, herein they have manifested to us that they have tasted the bitterness of such a sin, and God knows how to pardon them, and we may Hope that he hath remitted it to them, and accepted of them in his rich grace.

5. There are some that dy with a great deal of Comfort, & professed Hope, & possibly assurance of their good estate, and joyful expectation of the Glory to be revealed in them. They are both ready and willing to dy, and speak very comfortably concerning their after estate in another world; and this gives abundance of encouragement and comfort to their friends, and they are often ready to solace themselves in it. But the ground of this Hope is warily to be considered. It is indeed a very desirable thing in it self, to stand by and hear our dying Friend testifying of a good hope, for a blessed eternity. But then that which must derive strength to our Hope from hence must be gathered, not from the meer confidence of such a profession made by them, but by putting other circumstances thereto: And there

there are these two more Especially.

1. If there be a good agreement between their life and their Death. For us to hear one that hath lived in all good Conscience, and hath approved himself faithful unto God in his generation; now at last bearing a full Testimony to the love of God to him, in his life, and rejoycing in Christ his Saviour; and the expectation of his Glory at his death; singing with Good Simeon; Luk. 2. 29. 30. Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation. This is a precious and Heart-Ravishing thing and gives abundant cause of boasting Hopes concerning such an one. But to hear one that hath lived wickedly; vainly, profanely, all his days; that hath neglected his duties to God and men. never testified any love to Jesus Christ and his ways all his life long, while he enjoyed health, and strength, and opportunity, nor yet so much as dumgest Goodly sorrow and repentance for his formerly misspent life. On his sick-bed; Talking of his Comforts and Assurances, and discouraging of Death and Eternity with a Bedate and Composed frame, is a most Astonishing thing, and so far from strengthening; that it weakens, nay let me say it extinguisheth the Hopes of any considerate Christian concerning such an one: and serves to fill him with doubts and despairing fears about him.

him. We read of those who despise God in their lives, and yet have no bonds in their death, and he looks just like one of these: and this looks like the effect of a *fearful* conscience, accompanied with the delusions of Satan.

2. If it be accompanied with a Suitable Frame of Spirit, When this professed confidence is waited upon with great *self* abasement, and *self* abhorrency, with adoration of, and admiration at the riches of free Grace which hath appeared in the giving of *him* the Hope: acknowledging his utter unworthiness of it, and ascribing it all to the undeserved mercy of God in *Jesus Christ*, extended to him who was as bad as others, and had done nothing to merit this, but the quite contrary: here is good matter of thinking well of, and rejoicing with such an one: Whereas when men draw their comforts, and satisfying conclusions from themselves: they thank God they have loved *him* always, they have kept his Commandments from their youth, they never sinned as these and those have done, and the result of all centers in what they have been and done, and they seem to rest upon their own Righteousness, or only upon the general notion of Gods mercy, and his good will to mankind, and they therefore conclude that he will have mercy upon them, these confidences are poor and shallow, and

and may be exprest by an unjustified Pharisee,
Luk. 18. 11. with 12.

5. There are some that dy in a Cloud. They labour of a great deal of doubting and jealousy, and fear about their own everlasting state, by reason of which disquietments they cannot dy with that willingness, and cheerfulness, and resignation unto God, that many others do: they are wofully afraid of mistakes, presumptions, false and deceiving hopes, and this terrifies them, and indeed, this cannot but afford grief and trouble to those that sit about them: But yet it may be no impediment to our good hopes concerning them, whiles there are other substantial arguments to fortify them withal, for.

1. Actual Assurance proceeds from the joynt witnessing of the Spirit of God with our Spirit, *Rom. 8. 16.* till therefore he seals, and confirms, and testifies to our evidences, we shall for all them remain in suspense. A man may have really in him the things which accompany salvation, and have also such a discovery made to him, of their being in him, which he dares not to deny, and yet be much afraid of himself, suspect a mistake, and question whether they be not counterfeited: his confident and comfortable persuasion of the truth and reality of these things depends upon the confirmation given by the Spirit of God to his soul; but this notwithstanding:

withstanding, his State is mean while as safe and secure, as if he had the greatest satisfaction about it, though it be not so clear to him; he shall as certainly be saved as another, though he be not so well satisfied in himself concerning it; where God gives Grace, he will without fail give Salvation.

2. The Spirit of God is sovereign in the giving in this Testimony of his to the soul. He acts in it according to his own Wisdom and good pleasure. Gracious Souls have, in their lifetime felt of his with-drawing this witness from them upon these and those occasions, yea sometimes the most holy and consciencious men may be without it, they may fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his Servant, and yet sit in darkness and see no light. *Isa* 50. 10. and the same holy wisdom of his may see meet to suspend it at their death, as well as any other time; for who shall prescribe or set limits to him, who is not to be taught or directed by the creature, nor giveth to us an account of his actions.

3. Hence, if such an one hath lived like a Christian, and so as becomes Godliness. This can be no ground of weakening our hope about their everlasting welfare; his latter end shall be peace for all this: though we observe nothing but doubts and fears, yet he shall find in his eternal joy, that the very moment in which his soul departs from his body, he is put out of all his fears,

and when it falls among the Blessed Life-guard of Glorious Angels, who are sent to bring him home to the Kingdom, and lay him in the Bosom of his Blessed Redeemer, he shall then know himself happy: we may believe that God hath gracious ends in this thing, to humble him, and to do him good by it.

4. Though such cannot express that boasting confidence which others can; yet they may discover to our charity as much grace as others do. They may under this very cloud and darkness, express their endeared love to the Lord Jesus Christ, their earnest longings to see his face and be with him, their humble sense of their own unworthiness of his mercy, Justifying of him in this very dispensation of his unto them; their entire hatred of sin, and their deep self loathing by reason of it: their insatiable desires after Christ, and everlasting communion with him; the earnest breathings of their souls after more holiness, and whatsoever else is the proper fruit of Saving Grace in the Souls of Gods Children: and the observation of these things will give us a better foundation to build our hopes in respect to them upon, than the great confidence which many do express; because it is from such things as these are, that we fetch our arguments to perswade us that that is right and not deceiving.

7. Some

7. Some that have lived soberly in their Child-hood, have afterwards been drawn into leud courses, and would not hearken to counsel, neither of their Godly Parents, nor faithfull Ministers, till God came to lay them upon a sick and Death-bed, and then they have had terrible awakenings and Convictions, and made solemn confessions both to God and man, taken shame to themselves earnestly begged of God for pardon, and possibly also have testified some hopes that they have conceived hereupon of mercy and acceptance with God, and we have occasion to take notice of several such cases as these are; and concerning our Hopes about such, I would offer these two things.

1. They cannot be so strong but that they must needs be attended with no small fears too; and this is not without reason: they cannot be so prevailing because we had not the opportunity to see the trial of the sincerity of this repentance of theirs. The terrors of Death, and the apprehensions of eternity just now to be entred into, and the consideration of the dreadful miseries of ungodly men, may well put men into terrible agonies, and bring their sins to remembrance, and make them to vomit up their morsels which before lay indigested upon their Consciences, drive them to making Confessions, to begging of pardon, and war-
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ning of others, in particular their Companions to beware of the like; and yet this may be but a legal work: we have seen some that under the terrors of Death have done the like, and yet recovering again, they *returned to their vomit, and wallowing in the mire*; and that God should make it a common thing to give Repentance unto life upon a Death-bed, to such as despised his Grace all their lives before, is a thing scarcely to be thought of.

2. Yet may we have some support to our hearts under this. To be sure it is a thousand times better to see a sinner dye under the sense and burden of his sins, bitterly bewailing of them, than in a senseless stupid frame, as too many are observed to do; and not only so, but though we may not dare to assert a frequency of this manner of application, lest sinners should be encouraged to delay until then: so we may not deny a Sovereignty to the Grace of God, extendible hitherto, that he can take his own time, and if it be at last who shall forbid him? yea and farther than so too, for God also hath sometimes done such a thing, there is instance for it in the Scripture, that so all our hopes may not utterly be cut off, from encouraging us about such as those over whom when they are ready to depart we stand with bleeding hearts: the very example of the Thief upon the

the Cross, whose dying repentance was accepted, declares it to be possible : and God is able to glorify his Grace more peculiarly by Saving of *such* an one who is born out of time, and called into his Kingdom, after the *eleventh hour* is current. And farther more if *such* an one hath been a Child of a great many prayers, and tears, and heart-breakings, if *it be such* an one unto whom you have been very faithful in Duty ? and for whom you have been very importunate with God that he would turn him, and though you have with grief and sorrow taken notice how he hath slighted your Counsels and trampled upon your reproofs, yet this hath not made you leave off doing your duty, to him, or to be willing to let God alone upon his account, but made you the more urgent and earnest ; you may well Hope that God is now at last come to answer your prayers and endeavours, and signalize his grace to them, by *plucking them out of the fire* which they were just dropping into.

8. Some there be who have spent their days in wickedness, and have given no Testimony at all either at or before their death of their Repentance, either God hath taken them away by some sudden stroke, in a speedy and violent death, they have gone in a moment to the grave ; or they have
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fallen into some violent sickness, which hath at once bereaved them of the use of their understanding, and they have died distracted without any the least capacity either of receiving counsel, or of giving glory to God by a free and humble confession of their sins: or, with *Nabal*, they have lain like a stone, and had no sense at all of any spiritual thing upon them. Such instances also there are not a few; and the Friends of such may well enquire, what Hope can we have?

Concerning such as these it must needs be confessed, that their fears are very great and amazing, and their hopes can be but very small: but yet give me leave to offer these rules to be considered.

1. It is the duty of all such silently and submissively to adore the Divine Sovereignty, God is free in the dispensing of his grace, and he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and it is too much boldness for the Children of men to call him to give an account of any of these matters. It is recorded concerning *Aaron*, that when his two elder Sons were slain by a fire from Heaven, in the very act of offering strange fire unto God, that he held his peace, *Lev. 10 3.* and of *Eli*, that when the most dismal threatning of the fearful destruction of his two wicked Sons was delivered unto him, he said, *It is the Lord;*

one, but with different lighting.

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let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3. 18
 David indeed was excessive in his mourning
 for his fondling Absalom, but he met with
 a sharp rebuke for it: God hath required it
 of us as a great duty, to fall down before
 him and worship him in the most severe of
 his dispensations towards us.

2. Not only is Gods absolute Supremacy,
 but his Righteousness to be acknowledged
 by us in such a case. Though the thing be
 terrible, yet he hath done nothing but what
 is just and equal in what he hath done; no-
 thing but what we had reason to live in
 continual expectation of: he hath warned
 us of, and threatened such things as these,
 that such as go on boldly in their trans-
 gressions and will not be reclaimed, shall pe-
 rish, and that quickly too; Prov. 29. 1. *He*
that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck,
shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without
remedy; he hath declared that strange Judg-
 ments do wait for, and shall fall upon such
 refractory ones as these: and they that will
 live wickedly under all the means of grace,
 and striving of Gods Spirit with them from
 time to time, have a great deal of reason
 to look for Gods Hand to overtake them
 every day, and when it doth thus fall out,
 it is no new or strange thing. God is holy
 in all these ways of his, and just in all these
 doings.

3. Such providences do loudly call us to a more serious and deep reflection upon our selves and our own ways. This is a crying voice from God unto us, to put us upon the taking of a more strict account how we have carried our selves towards God, and towards them too: whether we have not given him provocation by some grievous sin so to smite us, and whether we have not been greatly negligent in the doing of our duty towards them, when we had the opportunity and many fair advantages for it. This should humble us low before God, and put us upon the renewing of our Repentance, and peace with him; and by thus doing we shall have hope concerning our selves, that such an awful Providence as this is, shall work for our good; and so it shall turn also to our account, and make us the more careful to our selves, and over others, who are yet within the reach of our using the means with and for the bringing of them to obtain salvation.

4. It may be no little relief and support to the spirits of Gods Children even at such a time as this is, to be able to say that they have been faithful in doing of their duty to such. If whilst they were with us, and we had the opportunity, we prayed earnestly for them, carefully endeavoured to set before them a pious example in all the duties of Religion, and godly conversation; if we have taken unwearied pains with

with them in counselling; reprovings, restraining them, according to our best discretion, and as we have had opportunity; it will be a great relief unto us; for God will acknowledge our sincerity; and our labour shall not be lost, nor our prayers return empty.

5. We do not know what God may have done for them by a secret work in the interim. This is not to be doubted of, but that he can do his work suddenly; though woe to them who will boldly run the risque of such a thing. But he may have had mercy upon them, *inter portem & fontem*, it is not impossible but that his spirit may have wrought in them effectually; though if he have, it is not fitting that it should be known by us, lest there should be a shameful abuse made of it; yet the thing is not in it self an impossibility: and though it can be but a very languishing one, yet where there remaineth a *who knows?* hope is not without all relief.

6. And if we are those that fear God (and it is of no other that I am now speaking) it will but a little while before we shall be fully satisfied. If we should go mourning to the grave under the remembrance of such a thing as this is, yet it should be a support to us under that mourning; so as that it may not sink us, & distract us in the work God calls us to, to consider, that when we come to the Kingdom,

dom, and shall there have all our weakneses and imperfections done away, we shall then take everlasting satisfaction in all that God hath done; and the eternal glory which he will have by every one of the Children of Men; will be matter of our endless praises: and the hope of this should not be despised by us, in the deepest dumps that we are oppressed with all, by reason of such stupendous judgments of God.

The Doctrine handling of this Truth having been so much practical, the particular application may be very briefly dispatched: Here then,

U S E I

For Information; learn hence;

1. The great advantage that Gods people enjoy by the Gospel; and truly it is that which gives the Gospel no small commendation to the hearts of the Children of men: the consideration that it affords to men such an hope, from whence they may be deriving of those conclusions, the right improvement whereof will help to swallow up a great part of their sorrow, and make their Mourning to be comparatively next unto none: it provides and supplies us with such matter for hope to live upon, as hath solidity in it: but

with them in counselling, reprov- ing, restraining them, according to our best discretion, and as we have had opportunity; it will be a great relief unto us; for God will acknowledge our sincerity, and our labour shall not be lost, nor our prayers return empty.

5. We do not know what God may have done for them by a secret work in the *interim*. This is not to be doubted of, but that he can do his work suddenly; though woe to them who will boldly run the risque of such a thing. But he may have had mercy upon them, *inter portem & fontem*, it is not impossible but that his spirit may have wrought in them effectually; though if he have, it is not fitting that it should be known by us, lest there should be a shameful abuse made of it; yet the thing is not in it self an impossibility: and though it can be but a very languishing one, yet where there remaineth a *who knows?* hope is not without all relief.

6. And if we are those that fear God (and it is of no other that I am now speaking) it will but a little while before we shall be fully satisfied. If we should go mourning to the grave under the remembrance of such a thing as this is, yet it should be a support to us under that mourning; so as that it may not sink us, & distract us in the work God calls us to, to consider, that when we come to the Kingdom,

dom, and shall there have all our weakneses and imperfections done away, we shall then take everlasting satisfaction in all that God hath done; and the eternal glory which he will have by every one of the Children of Men, will be matter of our endless praises: and the hope of this should not be despised by us, in the deepest dumps that we are oppressed with all, by reason of such stupendous judgments of God.

The Doctrine handling of this Truth having been so much practical, the particular application may be very briefly dispatched: Here then,

U S E II

For Information; learn hence;

1. The great advantage that Gods people enjoy by the Gospel; and truly it is that which gives the Gospel no small commendation to the hearts of the Children of men: the consideration that it affords to men such an hope, from whence they may be deriving of those conclusions, the right improvement whereof will help to swallow up a great part of their sorrow, and make their Mourning to be comparatively next unto none: it provides and supplies us with such matter for hope to live upon, as hath solidity in it: hu-

man reason hath strained it self in seeking to find out many arguments wherewith to stop the current of sorrow, but it could never make a discovery of such as the Word of God hath furnished his people withall, and the Children of God have a great deal of reason to bless him for it, who have so much of occasion to be making use of it, who live among so many deaths, and are so often called into mourning over their choice Friends and Relations, whom Gods Providence is from time to time snatching out of their arms and embraces. And truly, if the Gospel did not afford a better hope to them, than what carnal reason doth suggest, it would leave them *more miserable* and sorrowful than *other men*. They are but dark notions which the Gentiles have groped out by their best improvement of the light of nature, concerning the after state of men, and therefore their solicitude about it cannot be so great: but they that enjoy the Scriptures, and live under the means of grace, have more clear and distinct discoveries of an after Eternity which all men pass into by dying, and of the great miseries which men meet and fall upon such as dy in their unregeneracy: and if they had not a better prospect of the glories which are prepared for all those that dy in Christ, these thoughts would more terribly crush their minds,

binds. Let us then be thankful to God, that we are born in times and places of Gospel light; and let us improve this advantage for our help and consolation, on all such distressing occasions as these which may befall us.

2. That the composed Carriage of Gods people at the death and interment of their friends and relations, is to be commended. One great usefulness of Hope is to moderate Grief; and the moderating of that will produce a more sedate frame of Spirit, which will be discovered in the deportment of our selves; and not to improve it to this end and use, is to *despise the Consolations of God*, which he hath provided for us, and therefore provided, because he would not have his people to be transported into excesses of sorrow on such occasions. It is true, God hath allowed us to mourn; and it is an Honour that is put upon the remembrance of those that are departed, not to let them go without making it to appear that they were desired, and that the loss of them is an affliction to us; and it is a curse that hath been denounced against some, that they *shall dy unlamented*; it is also a blessing promised to others that they shall be mourned for, *1 Kings 14. 13. all Israel shall mourn for him.* But still, the Affections ought to be under the Government of Reason, and much more

more of Religion; the right regulating and moderating whereof, is no little part of the commendation of it; and the people of God do hereby shew themselves not to have been in the School of Christ for nothing.

U S E II.

This may also serve to reprehend the immoderate mourning of Christians, *as if they had no hope.* It is true, we ought to bear a great deal one with another in Infirmities, and not to insult over such as are over much born down by them; but Gods People ought not to allow themselves in any such thing, but willingly admit of a reproof for it; and I hardly know any one thing in which they do more deserve it; how many be there who are like *Rachel*, they mourn for their *Dead*, and refuse to be comforted, because they are not? who seem to take a kind of a sullen contentment in nourishing and giving way to sinking reflections on their spirits, whereby they may aggravate instead of mitigating their Grief, and that both by indecent words, and uncomely gestures? In words they express themselves so as if their loss were insupportable, their bereavement irreparable, murmuring against Gods Providence, charging him with hard dealing, and expressing prejudices against him: and in
gestures

gestures carrying of themselves after such a manner as carries abundant reason to make them ashamed of. In summe, this rebuke speaks to such who ;

1. Mourn too much. Their lamentations are excessive, they out do in quantity ; they can set no bounds to their sorrow, but suffer themselves to be quite over-whelmed ; their grief drinks up their Spirits : leaves them no room or liberty to take any comfort in any of the other many mercies and blessings of God which are yet continued to them, or giving to him the due acknowledgement of them, but, as if their comforts were all gone at one stroke, they cast themselves into the current, and suffer themselves to be carried away in the stream of sorrow : and there is not one word to be thrust in or spoken to them which they will hear, they cannot bear to be told of any thing that might relieve them in the least, or convince them of their Duty of patient and submissive bearing the hand of God that is upon them ; the very mention of such a thing puts them into the most violent transports of an ungoverned passion.

2. Mourn too long. If it were only for the present, whilst their spirits are under a sudden surprize, and by reason thereof their sorrows are too hard for them, having gotten an advantage over them ; although this

is not to be justified, yet it might better be allowed; but when they settle themselves to it, and resolve to bid adieu to all joys any more; they go mourning from day to day, and year to year, and never strive to get themselves into any composed frame, and their minds stayed; this is altogether a fault to be reprehended, it calls for a sharp rebuke; this is at least Heathenish, if it be not a great deal worse.

3. Their mourning puts them by their Duties which they owe the constant performance of unto God. Any thing that obstructs a Christian Conversation, and takes men off from the service of God is to be reprov'd, and there are the Duties which we are called to a constant upholding of, and in so doing we express our faithfulness to God. The sorrow which drives us to more care and diligence in these than before we used, is profitable for us; but that which puts us off from them, and so gives a check to our progress in holiness, is to be reprehended. All Christians are by Duty called to be spiritual Priests unto God, i. e. they are to offer up sacrifices of Thanksgiving unto him in an holy life; now the Priest of old, was not to lay off his garments for mourning, i. e. he was not to unfit himself for the service of the Altar. If Gods Children do by their sorrow put themselves out of any disposition

tion for the duties incumbent on them, they do amiss; and that this reproof may take effect upon us, let us consider;

1. By thus doing you bring reproach upon Christianity. Every Christian ought to be concerned more for the honour of God, and credit of his Religion, then for any thing that respects himself. If it were a truth, that you should gratifie your selves by complying with your own inclinations in so doing, yet if in the mean while you dishonour God and wound the credit of your profession, it is to be seriously thought of: and thus you do not a little, whatever you may think of it: the world will be ready to say, what is their profession better than ours, it will not teach them to carry it better in all conditions than we do? If we can manage our selves no more composedly with our Grace, than other men can do with meer Morality, what are we bettered by it? and indeed, all the discredit we thus get to our selves will reflect upon the profession that we make.

2. By this you put away those comforts from you, which God hath provided for, or at least makes the offer of unto you, what are those Gospel discoveries made for, wherein God doth so abundantly acquaint us with the happiness of his People after Death; those precious entertainments which they find with him, that glorious Heaven which
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He hath prepared for them, those Eternal Joyes which they shall swim in in the Kingdom, that precious company, and those perfectly happifying fruitions which they are there advanced unto, but only to give us an occasion thereby to comfort our selves in consideration of those that are gone to that place? God would have his Children to live comfortably under all their losses, and hath provided abundantly for it; but you thrust all away from you; and thereby offer contempt to these comforts; and put an affront upon God himself who offers them to you; and how unworthy a carriage is this?

3. Thus also you give Satan very great advantage against you. They who give place to over bearing sorrow, do therein give place to the Devil. This is the reason that Paul gives why he would not have that scandalous person dealt over rigidly withal, 2 Cor. 2. 7, 11. *lest Satan should take advantage*; when we are in such a frame we lie dangerously open to his assaults, and he may easily batter us with his Temptations, against which we then have but little heed to stand upon our guard; and if we refuse Gods consolations, we shall readily be brought to entertain Satans prejudices; then, how far he may draw us into sin by them, is not easy for us to determine, and that

will be sure to cost us sorrow in the sequel. Let Gods Children then be humbled for, and beware of indulging themselves in such things.

U S E III.

Let it now be for a word of Exhortation to all that hear this Truth, that we labour to get, strengthen, and improve this Hope. Hath God graciously provided such an Hope for his people? let us then make it our own, and when we have gotten it, let us nourish it, and be in a readiness to make use of it at all times when Gods Providence calls us to have the occasion to improve it.

To move us hereto, consider,

I. You cannot well live without it in this world of change; and it will be very uncomfortable Travelling through this Wilderness without such a cordial to refresh your tired Spirits; for you must expect to meet with such occasions of sorrow as well as other men. Gods people are not to promise themselves a discharge from this War any more than other men: if they should be so foolish as to feed themselves up with an expectation of it, their experience would in a little time confute these expect-

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at ons. Good men lose their Friends as well as bad; we see that wise men dy, as well as the foolish and brutish, *Psal. 49. 11.* and the more of these comforts that you do enjoy in this life, the more such bereavements you must expect to undergo: every one of them is mortal, and expoted to the common casualties by which God is wont to take men out of the world: and so much room as they have now gotten in your affections, so much sorrow you will be liable unto when they shall be taken away. Death hath as many ways to seiz them as it hath for others; and though godly men have more reason to hope for the sparing of the lives of theirs in a time of great Mortality by the Judgments of God upon a sinning people, than the wicked and ungodly have; yet it must be acknowledged that in these things God doth his pleasure, *That his Judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past our finding out.*

2 Such times will be hours of Temptation. All the afflictions in this life, are called *Temptations*, *James 1. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 6.* because where there is a trial in the things themselves, and that which both Satan and our own corrupt part in us are ready to make use of to tempt us withal, and draw us into some sin thereby; and when we lose our choicest comforts, there will be the sorest Tempta-

Temptations on that account: now we shall be ready to be full of thoughts about them, and our selves, and about God too, and that will hurry us, and put us out of hope, if we be not the more careful to our selves.

3. Hence your Affections will now have special need for something to moderate them. When such Providences have set them on working, and given vent to them, yea opened a great Flood-gate for them to run out at, you will now be sure to find great occasion for something to give check to the exorbitancy of them; they will else be very unruly, and bear down your Reason and Religion too before them, so as to precipitate you into strange exorbitancies. Now there is nothing more proper or suitable for this purpose, than to have this hope by you, ready to clap in and stop the breach: if any thing will do, this will. If you can swim ashore upon this plank, you will not need to fear drowning in the torrent of sorrow: the People of God never made use of this really, but they found it profitable for their help at such a time.

4. It is not the portion of all that live under the Gospel to enjoy this Hope. There are indeed the offers of it made to all that sit under the Ordinances, and a way is pointed out unto them how they might come by it, but it is not every one that hath obtained a title to it so as to

be owner of it: It hath been before shewn, that it is the portion of none but such as have truly believed in Christ, but all men have not faith; no not all that are visible believers, they have not that faith which is here requisite: It is proper to Gods Elect; it belongs to Gods Israel, but all are not Israel that are of Israel: and it is a foolish thing to presume of it, except you have made it yours by coming under the Covenant promise: and it will be a woful unhappiness now to arrogate it, and when you come to have urgent occasion to make use of it, then to find that it doth not belong to you.

2. Those that have it may obstruct the exercise of it, if they be not very careful to themselves. Besides the Habits of Graces, there are also dispositions requisite for the vigorous exerting of them, and though a saving Holiness can never be lost, yet this disposition may be either off or on, and this hath a great deal of dependance upon a Christians right improving of himself in his endeavouring to excite, and quicken, and enlivate his Habits. If a gracious Habit comes to be neglected, it will grow rusty and unfit for use, whereas if it be carefully nourished and strengthened, it will usually be very prompt and ready for the service which it is useful for; and it is an experienced Truth, that as there are many things which may do which will weaken and enervate

their Hopes, if they be not the more watchful over themselves, so there are several things which they may do, which will greatly activate them, and this therefore is your great prudence to consider of, and practice, for;

4. The exercise of this Hope will be very comfortable and profitable to you in such an hour. It will greatly heighten your spirits when they are ready to sink under the weight of sorrow; it will revive you when you are almost fainting with Grief; it will give the Soul a standing, and enable it to feel the ground when it is in the Flood; we live by Hope, Rom. 8. 24. It was Davias Catholicon against all despondencies, as we find, in Psal. 42, 43. this will be to us, light in darkness, joy in sorrow, comfort in heaviness, yea life in death it self: it will help you over the dashing billows which threaten to drown you, and afford you renewals of strength to enable you to hold on your course, and chearfully to travel thro' all the vicissitudes of time: by this you shall live comfortably in the midst of all these Storms, which will sink them that want it.

For Direction,

1. Make sure of your own good estate.

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There is no man can challenge the Gospel Consolations to himself, any farther than he hath this perswasion, that he is entituled to the New Covenant; he that will take the promise as belonging to him, and not arrogate what is not his own, must see that the condition be wrought in him: those only can assure themselves *that all things shall work together for their good*; all others may expect, and shall find all to turn to their harm: How shall that man comfort himself with such an Hope that this or that person is in Eternal Glory, who hath no grounded hopes that he himself shall ever come there? He may be in his conscience perswaded that such an one is gone to Heaven, but it is another thing to entertain such a perswasion with Hope; Hope is that in the exercise whereof the Soul is relieved, but what relief can an unbeliever have by such a perswasion, yea it is the Spirits work to give us the Consolation of our Hope, that it may have real refreshing in it, but such have not received the Spirit, and therefore can be under no such influence.

To think our departed friends are in Heaven, and to expect ourselves when we dye to go down to the Pit of Destruction, can give no Hope at all. Where Faith doth not lie in the Foundation, there can be no Spiritual Hope

Hope in the Soul; Would you then enjoy it, get into Christ by a *true and living Faith*, who is the Author of all our Hope, and so you shall have one *that will not make you ashamed.*

2. Be very Faithful in doing of your Duty to your Friends whiles they live with you. As God is wont very often to give his blessing unto the use of means, by making it successful in the thing intended, so usually he affords the greatest comfort to those who being bound in Duty so to use them, are accordingly most careful and conscientious therein. And on the other Hand, it oftentimes so falls out, that God brings about his Holy Purposes of destroying some sinners, by suffering of those under whose care and watch they were, to be remisse and negligent in the discharge of their Duty to them. *Eli*, in a great measure neglects his Duty to his Sons, and God tells him of it, but he mends it not, and the reason is, because *God would destroy them*; and it is not recorded for nothing concerning *Adonijah*, 1 Kings 1. 6 that *his Father had not displeased him at any time, in saying why hast thou done so?* and this becomes not only a righteous punishment of them that perish, but a just chastisement of the others neglect; there are the Relative Duties which we owe one to another, and when they are sincerely discharged, this will afford good nourishment

unto hope: we owe to our Children, when they are grown up to a capacity of it, instruction, good example, a restraining them from exorbitant courses, a reaching of them the good word, and ways of God, and this is the way in which God hath said he will bestow the blessing upon them, *Gen. 18. 19.* let us then be careful in this matter; & here;

1. Do it speedily. Take the season whilst you may; use the opportunity while it is in your hand. Their lives are uncertain, their times are in Gods Hand, and if we use unnecessary delays, feed our selves with purposes to do it afterwards, thinking that it is now too soon; the time may be lapsed, and they may be gone to the grave; and then to be sore they will be out of the reach of our ever doing any thing more for them.

2. Do it thoroughly. Be not perfunctory in this matter; be very serious in the work; it is a great thing, and of unspeakable moment: it is not to be done to the halves. How shall we expect them to be in good earnest in minding these things, if we are not so in our pursuit of them? let not carelessness, fond indulgence, sinister ends, or worldly affairs put us by any part of our Duty which we owe to them; Think not our care of their Souls to be the least or last care incumbent on us: what Christ bids us to do for ourselves, we should endeavour for ours also,

Math. 6. 33. Seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.

3. Do it perseveringly ; though you should meet with a great many lets and discouragements lying in your way, yet resolve to break through them all : though you can see no present good coming of all your pains and endeavours, though they should slight and despise, and grow more vain and obstinate under and after all ; yet do you commend your endeavours to God, and set to it afresh : think with your selves, if at the last you may but obtain what you long for, your labour will be satisfactorily recompensed : we are bidden *not to be weary of well doing, and in the morning to sow our seed ; &c.*

3. Take all the encouragements that God hath given you to strengthen your Hope by. God hath seen meet to afford his people a great deal, to establish their hope withal ; and if we would have it in exercise we must make use of it accordingly : In particular,

1. Live upon the New Covenant promises. Though God hath not given us any particular absolute promise, that this or that relation of ours shall be made happy in the everlasting enjoyment of himself when they dy, yet he hath afforded to us many encouraging promises concerning them, as hath been exemplified in the explication. He hath promised that *our labour shall not be in*

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Gain; he hath promised to be a God to our Children; he hath promised, that if they seek him he will be found of them; and now there is occasion for our making use of these and the like promises; and though they will not amount to full assurance, yet they will give strength to Hope.

2. Eye and observe the Providence of God in his answering of your endeavours with them. Take notice what effect your labour and pains have upon them. It is not enough for us to sow the seed, but we are to be watchfully looking for its coming up, and to observe how it thrives: and if you can discern them to be serious, willing to take counsel, and hearken to your advise; if you can find that they bring forth any fruit which is becoming them; and according to the Word of God, you are to receive this as an answer of your Prayers, and a token for good: and now you may comfortably recollect the remembrance of this, when they are gone; and bear up your spirits cheerfully: and the more memorials you have of such things as these the more let your hearts be encouraged, and your hopes strengthened thereby: the neglect of thus doing, many times leaves us at a loss, and under prevailing fears.

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134 The Mourners Cordial

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